

THE CITY DETECTIVE ON HIS METTLE!

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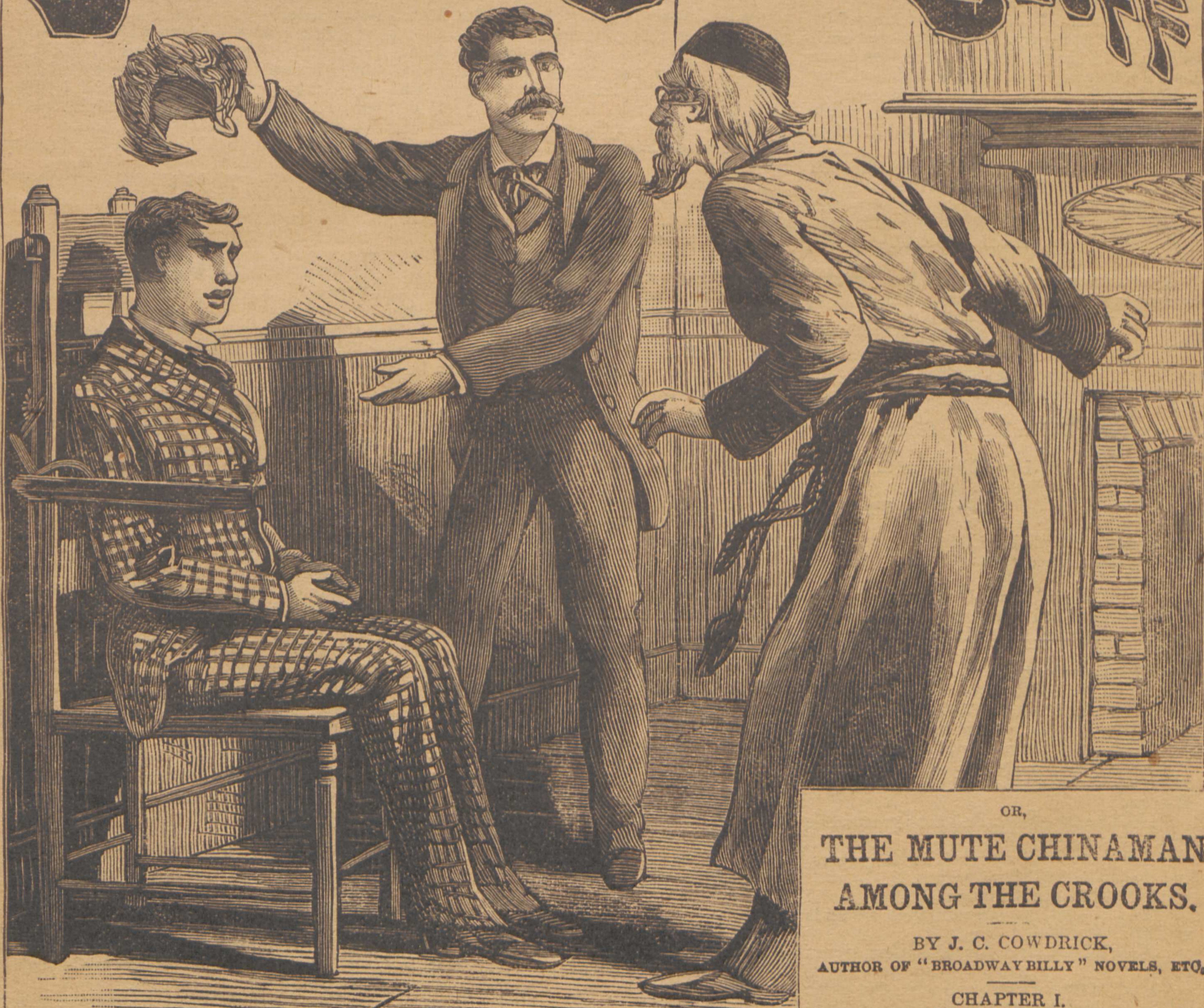
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BROADWAY BILLY'S BLUFF



OR,

THE MUTE CHINAMAN AMONG THE CROOKS.

BY J. C. COWDRICK,
AUTHOR OF "BROADWAY BILLY" NOVELS, ETC.

CHAPTER I.

THIS WAS STRANGE.

"CHRISTOPHER COLUMBIA! why don't something turn up? We have got our breath now, after our last tussle with wickedness, and we want to pitch in again before our muscles stiffen. What do you say, Silent Seth?"

"THIS IS BROADWAY BILLY. IN SPITE OF ALL DISGUISE, WE HAVE GOT YOU NOW, YOU DETECTIVE BLOODHOUND."

The Silent Shadower nodded, but said nothing.

He had nothing to say.

"And what do you say, boss?" and Happy Harry turned to Broadway Billy, their chief, that rising young detective of the metropolis.

"I agree with you, Harry," Billy made answer. "We don't want to be idle. We are cocked and primed for any consarned diffikilty that may pop up, so let 'er pop; sweet pertaters, yes!"

Billy gave voice to his old time exclamation once in awhile, just to delight his admiring apprentices.

And they enjoyed it, for in their more youthful days, before they ever thought of becoming identified with him in his work, they had read of his exploits with bated breath.

"Crackers an' cheese!" cried Harry, "that 's the talk! Seth, I don't see how you can sit there like a sphinx, when the jeebeeb is jeebing on his jeeber like this! Come, wake up and say something! What's the use of living, if you don't let your chin wag?"

"Nothing to say."

"Well, then, say it. I haven't anything to say, either, but I keep my harp in tune just the same, so I'll be ready to play when something is to be said."

"And perhaps Seth gives his tongue plenty of rest so that he can use it all the more to the point when the occasion requires," Billy suggested.

"Maybe that's it, boss; I don't know."

"Be that as it may," Billy went on, "each of you is well in his place. There was never such a talker as I was when a kid, and my ready tongue has helped me out of many a difficulty. On the other hand, too much tongue has gotten me into many a difficulty. So you are evenly balanced."

"It would never do to have two such stoicks as Seth," Harry observed.

"That's true; and I could never stand the chatter of two rattleboxes like you, Harry."

The opening of the office door interrupted their further talk.

A woman came into the office, a young woman, perhaps twenty-two years of age, one who was rather good-looking.

She was well dressed, her face showed her to be a person of intelligence, and when she spoke it was shown that she had a firm, musical voice, and that she was a woman of some education.

"Do I address Mr. Weston, the detective?" she asked.

"Yes, madam, I am Mr. Weston," Billy answered, rising, with a slight bow.

"I have called to see you on a matter of business, sir."

"Please be seated, and let me know in what way I can serve you, if it is my service you seek."

"And it is, sir. But, these young men—"

A glance toward Harry and Seth, who had immediately taken their places at other end of the office.

"My assistants, madam. I will send them out, if you wish, but they are fully intrusted with whatever business I take hold of, and if it is detective work you require—"

"It is all right, sir; let them remain. It is detective work I require. I have come to engage you to find a missing man, Mr. Weston."

"I had a case of that kind not a great while ago."

"Yes, I read all about it in the papers, and that has brought me to you."

"Is this case a similar one?"

"Only in that one feature, that a man is mysteriously missing."

"Well, let me have the particulars, if you please."

"First let me introduce myself. My name is Gretna Granton, and my home is at Granton, in New Jersey. My father is an extensive mill-owner there, and the place bears his name."

"I understand."

"This village, Granton, has two large mills on the banks of a creek from which they derive their power, and they, the mills, are the main support of the people of the village and neighborhood. The place is about eight miles distant from the nearest railroad station, Brisbane."

"Brisbane is quite a large town. There is a bank, of which my father is one of the directors and in which he does all his banking business. Every Friday the assistant superintendent and paymaster of my father's mills went to this town to draw money out of the bank with which to pay off the hands."

"I take it the person missing is this paymaster."

"You have guessed aright, sir. On Friday two weeks ago he went to Brisbane as usual, but was detained there until late in the evening before starting back again. He left the town about eleven o'clock, and shortly after midnight his horse—he had gone on horseback—came home dripping with sweat, the saddle empty. The paymaster was missing, and has not been seen or heard from since. It is a great mystery where he can be."

"Any marks of blood on horse or saddle?"

"None."

"Any clew of any kind, which the authorities have worked upon?"

"None whatever."

"What was done first, when the horse came home in that condition?"

"One of father's men happened to be at the stable when the animal dashed into the barnyard, so it was known immediately. He gave the alarm, and father sent a party of men right back over the road."

"The right thing. What did they learn?"

"Nothing."

"Nothing whatever?"

"Well, they carried lights, although the night was not a dark one, being clear yet without a moon, and they found that the horse had come some of the way at a dead run, as it is expressed."

"You say some of the way."

"Yes; something over a mile from our place."

"Then it could be discerned where the horse had sprung into a faster gait than before?"

"Yes."

"And where was that?"

"It was about at Granton Graveyard, as it is called, though it is at a distance from Granton."

"How came the graveyard so far away?"

"Our family is an old one, sir. For many years the old homestead was near there, and there was a little village—a church, and so forth. But now all that is gone, and all that remains is an old pile we call the Ruins."

"And what is that?"

"An old stone building, about a quarter of a mile back from the graveyard. It was built before the Revolution by a bitter Tory, and is something of a castle in its way. Around it one of the battles of the Revolution was fought."

"It is now untenanted?"

"No; there is a man living in it, a sort of recluse, whom people call the Mad Chemist."

"This grows interesting, Miss Granton. But we have drifted away from the case. Let us go back to that and finish it before we digress again. Now, what was the name of this paymaster?"

"David Haswick."

"Age?"

"Twenty-eight, sir."

"Was he well liked at the mills?"

"He was almost loved by every man in our village, sir."

"Proof enough for the kind of man he was, then. Now, had he an enemy that you know of?"

The young woman's eyes sought the floor.

"It is the same old story, sir," she said in reply.

"The oldest thing I can think of is that he had a rival in love."

"That was it, sir."

"Who was the person over whom they disputed?"

"I."

"So I thought. Well, who was this rival you mention?"

"His name is Richard Bardner, son of the president of the bank at Brisbane, and a man of good standing."

"Well, do you think he had anything to do with this matter?"

"Oh, no, sir; that cannot be possible."

"Then why did you mention him?"

"In answer to your question. He is the only one I know of who could have had any ill feeling toward Mr. Haswick."

"Then you had favored Mr. Haswick?"

"I had; I loved him."

"Has this man Bardner done anything toward solving the mystery?"

"He has worked with the others, sir; no one has been able to do much of anything."

"What has he had to say about the matter?"

"He has made it no secret that he did not like Mr. Haswick, but at the same time has been earnest in his desire to have the mystery solved, and if any harm has come to David, to have the guilty one punished."

"That does not sound like the talk of a guilty man."

"Oh, no; do not begin with the idea that Mr. Bardner is guilty. Though I do not like him, I cannot think anything so evil of him."

"You have told me Mr. Haswick left Brisbane about eleven o'clock that night. What detained him so late?"

"I was on a visit there, and he spent the evening with me."

"Ha! I see. And he had the money with him, of course. That gives us a motive for a crime."

"Yes; and it is feared that, somehow, he was waylaid and killed, and the body put out of sight. But, there was no indication of it on the road anywhere. The horse had not stopped."

"And no place was seen where he had fallen from the animal?"

"No, sir. It is truly a mystery."

"I agree with you, if that is the case. What more can you tell me about it, Miss Granton? Think well, and tell me all you can. Something which you may consider trifling may be of the greatest value to me. Think well."

CHAPTER II.

MORE OF THE SAME.

FOR some moments the young woman was silent, and then she spoke.

"Would it not be better," she said, "for you to ask questions, and so draw out what you want?"

"It might be, if you have told me all you can that bears directly upon the matter. I can know nothing about it further than what you have disclosed."

"And I do not know what more I can tell, unless by your questions you bring something new to my mind."

"Well, let us see: Your object in coming here was to engage me to find Mr. Haswick, or to try to find him?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, now, has this thought come to you—that perhaps he has taken that money and run—"

"Sir! No, no; dismiss that idea at once; it is unworthy of one moment's consideration. It is impossible."

"You, however, are biased in the matter, Miss Granton."

"Yes, I admit it; but, no one will believe that of David Haswick."

"Has the suspicion been raised, then?"

"It has been spoken of."

cl. "By whom?"
 "I really don't know."
 "And you say there is no one who will believe it?"
 "That is true."
 "Does that mean absolutely no one? Is there no person who favors that theory, Miss Granton?"
 "No one who knew him at all well will listen to it. There are others who are not so positive that it may not be so."
 "Who are they?"
 "Well, I do not think I can name more than one."
 "And that one—?"
 "Is Frederick Lycurgus."
 "And who is he?"
 "He holds the position of private secretary to the Mad Chemist, whom I spoke about a moment ago."
 "Then he was no friend to Haswick?"
 "Well, I have no reason to think he was his enemy, sir."
 "Do you know him well?"
 "As well as I care to know him. He is comparatively a stranger at Granton, but he moves in the best society there."
 "He is not another rival for your hand, with Mr. Bardner, is he?"
 The young woman's face flushed.
 "Well, he did once propose to me," she admitted, "but he took his refusal as a gentleman ought to, and retired when he knew Mr. Haswick was my favored suitor."
 "So, he is one who is inclined to believe Haswick may have run away? What does he say?"
 "Why, simply that he had a big sum of money and may have given way to temptation and absconded."
 "Does he point to anything in proof of that?"
 "He has mentioned that it would have been easy for him to leap from his horse at some place where his tracks could not be seen, and give the horse a fright that would send it home on a mad run."
 "That is not a wild theory."
 "Can you, then, believe that of Mr. Haswick?"
 "I believe nothing, yet, Miss Granton."
 "Did I think it of you, I would not employ you, sir."
 "It does not matter whom you employ, for, if honorable, he will work only to bring the truth to light."
 "And you will do only that?"
 "Why, certainly! That is my vocation."
 "Then I want you. Do not let expense stand in the way, but come to Granton as soon as you can and begin the case. I will pay your fee when you are done, whether successful or not. I am tired of having it drag along this way, for our home searchers are not likely ever to solve the mystery."
 "Very well, I can go at once, for just now I have nothing else on hand. But, does this man Lycurgus have any further suggestions in support of his view of the matter?"
 "Why, he adds that it would be impossible for any one to have attacked Mr. Haswick without leaving some sign of it somewhere."
 "He is right again. I may have to make his acquaintance. So return home, Miss Granton, but say nothing about having engaged me. Have you told any one you were coming to engage me?"
 "Only father."
 "Well, caution him to say nothing. By the way, what is his name?"
 "Stanwood."
 "That is all, for the present. If you do not hear from me in some days, do not be anxious; you will have proof that I am at work, in my own way."
 "But, suppose something has turned up to prevent you—"
 "In that event you will be notified promptly."

"Then I will say good morning!"
 With that the lady rose, and Billy escorted her to the door and politely bowed her out.
 No sooner the door closed than Happy Harry was standing on his head in the middle of the room, waving his legs about wildly in the air.
 Silent Seth got up quietly and took his privileged seat nearer the desk of their chief, with no more emotion of any sort visible upon his face than had been there before.
 Billy looked at Harry in an amused way, and then at Seth.
 "Yes, you two balance each other nicely," he observed. "You, Harry, exhibit plenty of enthusiasm for two; while you, Seth, are imperturbable enough for both."
 "Christopher Columbia!" cried Harry, leaping lightly to his feet, "I can't help it any more'n I can help eating! You see, the daddy was father to the wish, that time, or however it goes."
 "Yes, you got your wish pretty soon, that's so; but you don't express it quite correctly."
 "Oh, no matter 'bout that; you know what I mean, and that's all that's necessary. If I can't express a thing I send it by freight, and it gets there just the same. But, crackers an' cheese! here we are again, up to our necks in biz!"
 "Yes, we have another tangle to untangle," said Billy, taking his seat at his desk. "What do you boys think of it?"
 "Think of it?" repeated Harry. "Why, it's mystery, that's sure, and I'm gettin' in a fever a'ready to see how it comes out. I'd like to learn what became of 'our hero,' don't ye know."
 "And what do you think, Seth?"
 "I was anxious to hear you question the woman further about that Mad Chemist, sir," the Silent Shadower responded.
 "Yes, I am interested in that, too, Seth; but I did not want the young lady to know it, so I did not question her any on the point. I'll find out more about him when I go out there. He may be a mad chemist, but also a mighty cunning schemer!"
 "That's just where my fever is highest, too," averred Harry. "Here is a good old graveyard in the case, and old, old ruins, and it will be a poor play if we can't work in a ghost or goblin or spook somewhere. If there's one thing more than another I'd like to see, that thing's a real and sure enough specter, who galivants around at night in a sheet."
 "Well, I can't promise you that treat," said Billy, "but I think we'll have some solid flesh and blood to deal with. I'm inclined to think it has been a robbery, with perhaps a murder along with it. If not that, then I must see whether the missing man had any motive in lighting out with the money. It has been one thing or the other, I think."
 "Looks that way, boss, fer sure. But the trail is pretty cold by this time, and we may not git our grip on it very easy."
 "We'll do the best we can."
 "When are you going to start?"
 "I'll get out there to-night, if I can."
 "Take us with ye?"
 "No; I'll send for you if I want you. I'll try to give you both a chance to figure in it."
 "Christopher Columbia!" ejaculated Harry, "you had better find something for us to do in it, if you don't want to find us both dead of the blues when you get back! Hey, Seth?"
 "We want to be up and doing," Seth agreed.
 "Hear that!" cried Harry. "Say it can't talk, hey? I'll bet it can talk a yaller streak, if it once gets started. Seth don't say much, but it ain't often he misses the bull's-eye when he does set his mill to running."
 "Never worry about Seth, if the occasion requires talk," assured Billy.
 "And never worry about talk, whether

the occasion requires it or not, when it is yours truly," supplemented the irrepressible Harry.

"You are right. Let's see, now, what time I can get a train to that town of Brisbane."

He took up a railway guide and consulted its pages.

While he was so doing, Harry was talking to Seth in an endless strain, and while all were thus engaged the door opened again.

This time it was to admit a messenger boy.

"Mr. Weston?" he asked.

"Yes."

The boy stepped forward and delivered a note, took Billy's receipt for it, and departed at once.

Harry pressed forward eagerly to learn what the message might be about, if Billy chose to tell, but Seth sat quietly in his place, apparently unconcerned.

Billy had broken the seal before the messenger had got out of the room, and almost by the time the door had closed he had mastered the contents of the missive and an ejaculation of surprise escaped him.

"Christopher Columbia! what is it?" demanded Harry. "Do tell me, 'fore I have a fit o' kernipshun right here on the floor. Does it belong to this case, boss?"

CHAPTER III.

A SIDE ISSUE CROPS OUT.

BROADWAY BILLY'S exclamation, and the expression of his face, had told the young beagles that the message was important, or at any rate full of interest to their chief.

"Yes, it does relate to this case, boys," he made answer to the excited inquiry, and Billy at once read the message aloud.

"TO DETECTIVE WESTON:—

"You will find it better for your health to keep away from Granton than to go there. Give up the case, and remain where you are. You are not wanted, so take this as a gentle hint."

"THE EYE THAT NEVER SLEEPS."

"Chris-to-pher Co-lum-be-yah!" yelled Happy Harry. "If that don't mean we are in for a regular circus of a time, then my grandmother didn't know ducks from a quack doctor! Whoop-ee! but I'll bet there is more in it than a robbery, boss; I'll bet you are going to work up one of the worst consarned diffikilties that ever was brewed!"

"Well, they have done it, as usual," Billy quietly remarked.

"Done what?"

"Put their foot in it."

"Don't ketch on, boss; what ye mean?"

"Why, they have given themselves away in good shape!"

"Oh, if I only had some brains in the place where brains ought to have been put!" moaned Harry.

"Don't you see how it is?"

"I'm trying to get my grip on it, boss, but don't seem to strike fire very sharp."

"Do you see it, Seth?"

"You know now there is a foe to deal with, for he has been heard from," the Silent Shadower made answer.

"That's it!" averred Harry. "Brains will count, every time. I see it now: this young woman has been followed, and it is known that our combination has been employed on the case."

"Just so, my boy. That is the way rascality overreaches itself in seven cases out of ten. Here is proof for one thing, anyhow."

"And what's that?"

"That the paymaster did not run away with the money, but has met with foul play!"

"I'll bet a cent to a red herring you are right, boss! And I'll bet another that he is alive and kicking this minute too!"

"He may be, but I can't say yet. But here is a clue to begin with, and I must find out who The Eye That Never Sleeps is, and then I'll see if I can't put him to sleep without chloroform."

Harry laughed at that.

"I'll bet if you get a fair crack at that eye, boss, you will put it to sleep, sure."

"There's one thing in the way, now," Billy mused.

"What is that?"

"I can't get out to Brisbane without their knowing it."

"What's the odds? You can throw them off the track, with your disguises, and they'll have to get up early to get onto you."

"That's all right, but we have to allow for a full complement of brains on the other side every time, Harry, boy. They may be sharper than I am myself, you know, and that would be odds against me."

"It's a risk you will have to take, though, boss."

"Haven't you a plan, Seth?"

"Well, I don't pretend to be brainy," answered Seth, "but I would suggest a straight trip to Granton first, and then a disguise next time."

"And get killed the first time," objected Harry, "and the second trip would have to be laid on the table indefinitely, as the Albany reporters get it in when they show up doings that way."

"That is my plan, though," Billy assured.

"More proof that Seth is the brains of the concern. Well, I don't care, I'm the tongue."

"Yes, that is what I'll do," Billy repeated. "I see there is a train out in about forty minutes, so I'll make ready and take that. I'll be back again to-morrow if nothing happens."

"And you want us to keep house, of course," Harry remarked.

"Certainly; keep the office open till closing time, and open it again in the morning as usual."

"We'll keep it straight, you bet!"

"And, if I do not return, but want you, I will telegraph to you here, using the usual cipher."

"Kerreck, boss."

"What if you do not return, and we do not hear from you?" asked Seth.

"Hello! Brainsey has spoken again," exclaimed Harry. "Had somethin' to say, too, like he always does."

"In that case," Billy answered, "you will know something has gone wrong. I'll tell you; if you have not heard from me by to-morrow this time, you will know that something has happened, and you will have business at Brisbane and Granton."

"There, now we have got it as straight as a string," asseverated Harry. "And if we do have business out there, you bet we'll make things hum, boss, till we find you."

"But, you will have to use caution—exceeding caution—not to get into trouble."

"We'll try to, you bet; anyhow I will, and I'll try to keep Seth under my wing."

Billy was preparing for his trip while they talked.

Presently everything had been arranged, and the young detective chief took his leave.

"Well, what do ye think of it, Seth?" queried Harry, when he had gone.

"I think there is business ahead," was the answer.

"So do I, you bet! and I think we are going to come in for a share of it, if my fever don't lie. I tell you what, Sethy, old boy, we are in this combination to win, every time. What say?"

"We are here to do our little best," the silent partner replied.

Broadway Billy had not been gone a great while when a stranger entered the office. He was a man about thirty years of age, certainly not any younger; well dressed, and one who would have passed muster for good looks.

"This is the office of Weston, the detective?" he made inquiry.

"Yes, sir," he was answered.

"But, Mr. Weston is not in, I take it?"

"No, sir; he has gone away."

"When will he return?"

"We look for him back to-morrow, sir."

"To-morrow, eh? That will be pretty late for this case."

"Did you want to engage him?" inquired Seth.

"Yes, if I could get him at once; as it is, I suppose I must look for some one else."

"Just as you think about that, sir; you might leave your name and address, and give us an idea of the work required, and we will inform the chief when he returns."

"Where did you say he has gone?"

"We didn't say yet," answered Harry.

The man smiled.

"I see you are sharp, youngsters," he remarked. "Well, I will do as you suggest in the matter."

"All right, sir; here are writing materials; sit down and write whatever you have to say, and we'll see that he gets it."

Silent Seth said that, offering Billy's chair, and putting out pen and paper for the man to use.

At the same time, the silent partner caught Harry's eye and signaled.

Harry took the hint and was quiet, wondering.

"I don't know that it's necessary to write what I have to say," the man said, musingly. "You boys can tell him, can't you?"

"Certainly, sir," assumed Seth. "You will want to write down your name and address, though, so there can be no mistake about that."

"Yes, that's true. But, what's the difference?—I'll jot down the points of the case while I'm about it."

He sat down, took up the pen, and wrote rapidly for a few moments.

"There," he observed presently, getting up, "that is all I need say. If he can take the case, ask him to telegraph at once to that address. He may telegraph anyhow, so I will know."

"All right, sir," said Seth. "We'll see to it."

Both Seth and Harry had noticed one thing, and that was, that this man had eyed them both sharply, as though fixing their features in his mind.

He exchanged some further brief remarks with them, and took his leave from the office.

"Follow him, Harry, and see where he goes," advised Seth. "Then we'll know if this is a fake."

"You think it is one?" Harry asked, making haste with a disguise.

"Yes, I do; I believe this has something to do with the very case the boss has taken in hand."

"Christopher Columbia! you don't say so! What makes you think that? You are a seer, that's what you are; seeing a mare's nest in every bush."

"No time now to explain; tell you all when you come back. Get a move on you. Can't both go. This writing is just like that of the note the boss got before he went away, and I think this is the man who wrote that note. *Git!*"

"You bet! Crackers an' cheese! if that's the case we are going to get into this thing clear up to our ears, and don't you forget it! Now I'm ready, and he ain't more'n at the bottom of the stairs. The jeebeeb will have him jeebed on his jeeber in about two jeebs of a jeebung! Selah!"

CHAPTER IV.

BILLY MAKES AN ACQUAINTANCE.

WITH that Happy Harry was off, leaving Silent Seth reading over again the brief note the stranger had left.

"I'll bet I am not mistaken," the Silent Partner mused. "I'll bet this is the very party who sent the other note, and if that is the case, there are two of them. One has followed the chief; the other has played this dodge to get a look at me and Harry."

This was the note the stranger had left:

"TO MR. WESTON:—

"You are wanted in Hartford to take charge of a mysterious case, murder and robbery together. Desire you to come, bringing your assistants, as quickly as possible. Telegraph immediately upon receipt of this whether you can take the case or not."

"HENRY RUBERT,

"No. — — street."

"Yes, sir-ee, that is a fake, right on the face of it," Seth further mused, talking more to himself than he would have done had he not been alone. "That reads as if it had been sent by telegraph, and in such a case it would have been sent that way, too; this fellow lacks a button somewhere. We'll get onto his haze, I'm betting, before he goes far."

He settled down to await the return of Happy Harry.

It was about closing time when Harry bounded into the office with a whoop.

"Christopher Columbia!" was his shout. "You were right, Seth, an' you 'most always are! The fellow set sail for Brisbane!"

"I knew it!" declared Seth, warmly for him. "They are overreaching themselves in fine style this time."

"What was the note he left?"

Seth showed it to him.

"That's the fellow!" Harry decided. "It is the same writing as the note the boss got 'fore he went away. The fellow hasn't got all his harness on, that's what is the matter with him."

"He don't know us," Seth suggested.

"You are right; he don't, for a nickel's worth!"

But our interest lies in following their chief.

Billy took the train for Brisbane at the hour indicated on the time-table.

About the time the train started a young man came into the car and sat down in the seat with the young detective, and opening a paper, began to read.

Billy noted that he had passed one vacant seat, and two or three that had but one occupant, so he made up his mind this person had taken the seat beside him for a purpose. And, too, he at once connected him with the warning message he had received.

The train started, and for some time the young man read his newspaper attentively; then he found occasion to turn the paper, and, in doing so, hit Billy's arm.

"I beg pardon, sir," he made haste to apologize.

"No damage done," Billy assured.

"Going far, sir?"

"Brisbane."

"Ha! that so? That's my destination. We have to change at the junction, I suppose you are aware."

"That was what I understood, but I was not sure about it, I never worry much about changes till I hear them announced. It's the conductor's business to see that I go straight."

"Yes, so it is; but people often go astray all the same."

"Do you live at Brisbane?"

"Yes."

"Large place?"

"Eight or ten thousand."

"Quite a place, then. How far is Granton from there?"

"About eight miles. Are you going out to that place to night? You'll find it a lonesome road."

"Yes, I'm going out there. I am going on a matter of business."

Billy designedly intended to show his hand to this fellow, believing the man had taken the seat purposely to draw him into

the conversation, and was quite willing to let him succeed.

"There was a mysterious disappearance on that road about a couple of weeks ago."

"I know it, and that is what takes me there now."

"You don't tell me!"

"Yes."

"Then you are—"

"I am a detective, sir."

"Well, well! This is amazing to me."

"Why need it amaze you so?"

"Oh, to think that I should have the honor of—"

"Ha, ha!" laughed Billy. "Small honor in that, sir! Many people rather despise our calling."

"They are the cads, then, who know nothing about it. But may I ask your name? since you have seen fit to disclose so much to me?"

"I am William Weston, better known as Broadway Billy."

"The dickens you are! This is an honor not to be sneered at, then, for I have read a good deal about you."

"May I ask your name?"

"Certainly; my name is Richard Bardner. My father is president of the National Bank at Brisbane."

"I'm glad chance has thrown us together, sir. Perhaps you can give me some information about the matter that is taking me out your way."

"If I can I will do it gladly, sir."

The young man folded his paper and put it in his pocket, and settled down for a solid chat with his new acquaintance.

"It was from the National Bank that Mr. Haswick drew money on the day of the evening he was missing, I believe?"

"Yes; several thousand dollars."

"And it looks reasonable to suppose that he was waylaid, robbed, and maybe put out of the way for that."

"Yes, that is the general impression; but, how was it done?"

"It is a great mystery because there was no trace of any attack anywhere along the road, I suppose?"

"Yes, that's it."

"Well, is it really known that he did set out from Brisbane that night?"

"Oh, yes; he was visiting a young lady till late in the evening, and when he left her he set out for home immediately."

"But, I mean, is it known that he actually got out of the town? It may be that the horse went all the distance, riderless, you know. But, I suppose that theory has been exploded."

"No, I do not think it has. I have not heard it mentioned at all."

"That seems strange, does it not?"

"Yes, now that it seems so plain, it does; but, you see, they found the place where the horse started at a mad run, and naturally supposed that it was there the deed was done, whatever it was. But, this does not necessarily follow, for the horse might have taken fright riderless."

"That is the point, and I must know whether or not Haswick got out of your town that night, at all."

"I think the question will create a sensation, for I am sure it has not been thought of, strange as it may seem."

"And strange it does seem. But, I take it for granted it is generally known that he did set out from town, though you have not heard much about it further than what the young lady has told."

"That may be it."

"Where was it the horse took fright, as you mention?"

"About half a mile out of Granton, along by the Granton Graveyard."

"By a graveyard? Maybe there is a ghost in the case, and that was what gave the animal its scare, laughing."

"A ghost there is, sure enough, at that

graveyard," declared young Bardner, soberly enough. "It has been seen more than once, too; yes, more than a score of times, by persons who have passed that way late at night."

"Ha! now the case is growing romantic. It is not every case I take up that can show a *bona fide* ghost."

"But, this is no joke I'm giving you, understand."

"I understand that, of course. I think I'll try and make the acquaintance of his Ghostship, if possible."

"What! would you risk such a thing?"

"Certainly; and what risk is there, since ghosts are bodiless and harmless?"

"There are men in our town whom you could not hire to pass that graveyard between the hours of eleven and one at night."

"And who are they?"

"Those who have once seen his Ghostship, as you call him."

"Foolish men, that's all. If it is a ghost, it is harmless, and if not a ghost, a bullet will probably wing it."

"There is where you make your mistake, sir."

"How is that?"

"It has been tried."

"If that is the case it must be a ghost, I suppose."

"Yes, so we all think. A party of young men from Brisbane set out one night on purpose to lay it, and they failed miserably. Each one was armed with a revolver, and they fired a volley at it, but their bullets had no effect. And then strange voices were heard in the air, and they got frightened and had a race with one another to see which could get away from there quickest. And, what was more, I was one of the party, and I know what I'm talking about."

CHAPTER V.

THE GRAVEYARD GHOST

BILLY and his companion kept each other company until their arrival at Brisbane.

The young detective had done what he could to win the confidence of the man and had let fall no word that could awaken a suspicion.

He felt pretty certain this was the person who had sent the threatening message to him, and if right in that, wanted to lull the man into a sense of false security.

Billy had made known his business at Brisbane in a way not calculated to inspire confidence in his ability as a detective, and that had been just his purpose. He was willing to let them think his reputation had been built upon a very shaky foundation.

"Well here we are," observed Bardner, when they alighted.

"And a pretty town it seems to be," remarked Billy, "what I can see of it."

It was growing dark.

"Yes, we flatter ourselves we have about as pretty a town as can be found in the country round."

"Well, now for a hotel; can you show me to one?"

"Yes, we'll go right there, and I'll introduce you, if you want I should."

"Yes, introduce me for my errand here is no secret and I'm willing to let it be known who I am."

A little walk brought them to the leading hotel of the village.

They entered the bar-room and office together and there young Bardner introduced Billy to the landlord.

The landlord's name was Priceley a fat man with a face as red and round as the rising sun and a voice like the inside of a bass-drum.

"A detective, hey? Mr. Priceley rumbled."

"Yes, sir," Billy assured. "And a hungry one at that."

"Well, we have something that will cure that complaint, sir, supper is just ready."

"Then I'll lose no time about getting at it. Will you come with me, Mr. Bardner?"

"No, I must go on home, but I'll drop in after awhile, if you will be here."

"I'll be here till late, so come along."

Billy went in to supper, and Bardner stopped to talk a little with the landlord.

"Goin' out to Granton, is he?" the landlord observed. "Well, he's welcome to the ride alone at that hour, that's all."

"And what do you think of him?"

"Oh he is a young flip, I think, with more gall than brain. He's got a name somehow, but hang me if I see how he got it. I think this case will stump him so bad he won't ever show his face here again."

"My own opinion exactly," and Bardner went out.

When Billy reappeared from the dining-room, he made inquiry about a horse for his further journey.

"Want a wagon, too, I s'pose?" the landlord asked.

"No, only a saddle."

"Goin' alone?"

"Yes."

"Well, if I was you I wouldn't, that's all."

"Why not?"

"Tain't safe."

"How so?"

"Well, you are going to try to work up that Haswick case, Bardner told me, and you know what happened to him."

"On the contrary, sir, I do not know what happened to him. That is the very business that brings me here, you see."

"Well, he disappeared, that's what happened to him, sir. He set out for the same place one night, and that was the last that was seen of him."

"By the way, does anybody know that he really did set out from here that night, landlord?"

"Does any one really know it?"

"Yes."

"Why, to be sure they do!"

"Well, who does know it? You see, there is a question in my mind that maybe he did not get out of Brisbane at all."

"Then you want to get it out of your mind, for I was one that seen him make the start."

"And there were others?"

"Yes, a dozen or more."

"Then that is disposed of. Where did you see him last?"

"Why, he stepped in here to get a cigar and light it before he set off, and I stepped to the door with him and saw him gallop around the corner below here and out onto the main road."

"How did he appear to be? That is, was he in good spirits?"

"Nobody ever saw him in any other, my son."

"Did anybody say anything about his lonesome ride before he set out?"

"Yes, I did myself. Said I—'You have got a lonesome road ain't you some afraid?'"

And said he—'Not a bit, I've got my barker with me.' And with them words he pulled out his revolver and showed it."

"Then he was armed."

"Oh! sure."

"Well, that point is settled, then, Haswick did set out from here that night, and his disappearance took place on the road."

"There is no question about that young man."

"Is there any question as to his honesty? That is do you think he may have disappeared purposely?"

"See here, young fellow, you want to get that idea out of your head right away about Dave Haswick. He was not that kind. Besides he had everything in his favor here."

"Maybe he had some secret use for that money—"

"It won't go down boy. He had double that amount in the bank in his own name, and he owned property at Granton worth as much more."

"That settles it, sir; that was what I wanted to know. But about the horse I asked for?"

"You shall have him. What time do you start?"

"About eleven o'clock."

"All right; it's your own funeral, I suppose, but I wouldn't care to pass Granton Graveyard at midnight."

"I am not afraid of the ghost, sir; and, maybe I won't see it anyhow."

"Maybe you won't, for some can't; but if you do see it I'll bet you won't forget it in a hurry."

Billy remained at the hotel, making some acquaintances and listening to all that was said.

Bardner returned, as he had promised, and Billy had a good chance to study him well.

Finally came the hour for the young detective to set out.

He had inquired the road, and understood it as well almost as though he had already been over it, and he set off without any doubt on that score.

The crowd at the hotel wished him a safe trip, declaring that they would be anxious to learn how he got through.

Billy found the road a fine one, and being an expert rider, thanks to his Texas experience, he enjoyed the trip and went along at a good rate of speed.

He had made more particular inquiry about the road as it drew near to the cemetery, and as he approached that point he knew just about when to expect the cemetery to come into view.

The night was not dark, though there was no moon, and presently the ghostly headstones broke upon his sight.

"Well, here I am," Billy said to himself, bringing his horse down to a walk, "and now let his Ghostship stalk forth and I'll try a sly shot at him and see what the effect will be."

He was proceeding down a gently-sloping hill, and the cemetery lay at the bottom of the descent, on the right hand side of the road.

Along the road in front of the cemetery was a stone wall, and in the middle of that wall an iron gate.

Billy's sight was keen, even at night, and these points were easily made out.

Then, near the gate, on the side from which he was approaching, was a large tree, and under the shadow of that, as he made out when he came nearer still, was a big vault.

The young detective approached at a walk, his revolver in hand, ready for instant use.

As he was approaching the tree a bluish light suddenly surrounded the vault, and the horse gave a snort of terror.

Billy spoke to the animal and held the rein with a firm grip, his revolver in hand.

Almost simultaneously with the appearance of the light, there came forth from the front of the vault what appeared to be a ghost of the genuine sort.

The horse gave a cry of fright, but its rider held it firmly, and at the same time Billy let go a bullet straight at the apparition, whatever it was, one that was intended to do damage, too.

But no damage was done, apparently, for the ghost gave forth the most ghostly laugh imaginable, and lifting one spectral arm, with a part of its flowing white robe, pointed straight at the daring detective and called out, in deep tone:

"Rash man, return whence you came! Nothing but death is here for you; your doom is sealed if you ride on to yon village."

Billy's response was another shot, the effect of which was no more visible than that of the first.

And then, in the air overhead, was heard mocking laughter, and the horse, wheeling

suddenly, dashed away up the road in the direction it had come; and as Billy was carried away he gave vent to a yell of seeming terror, and the wild laughter rung out more wildly still.

CHAPTER VI.

BILLY'S BAD REPORT.

BROADWAY BILLY looked back as he ascended the hill, and as the laughter died away he saw the strange light disappear.

"Sweet pertaters!" he said to himself, "I don't wonder the rustics are frightened half out of their wits. That is a ghost of the real old-fashioned kind, no mistake."

Then he laughed to himself, half aloud.

"Well, old horse," to the animal he rode, "you brought me out of there in a hurry, whether I would or not, and they will think they have frightened me out of six months' growth, more or less. Ha! ha! ha!"

By his manner it did not appear that he was very badly scared, whatever the appearances.

"You did me a good turn, anyhow, old nag," speaking again to the horse. "It will just suit my purpose to let them think they have spooked me away, for then they will not be quite so vigilant. My inning next time, Sir Ghost, and I'll get there!"

He made no effort to bring his horse down to a more moderate speed, but let it have its own way, and for a mile or more, the furious gallop was kept up.

And even when it began to tire, and would have stopped, he urged it on, and by the time he rode into Brisbane the animal was dripping with sweat and was pretty nigh used up.

"The hotel had not yet closed for the night, for such places are not early in closing, but most of its patrons had taken their leave, and the landlord was outside on the piazza putting up the shutters."

He heard the horse coming, and dropped the shutter he had in hand as Billy dashed up to the steps and sprung from the saddle.

"Hello! What's the matter?" demanded the landlord, and there was just the suggestion of mirth in the tone.

"What time does the next train start for New York?" Billy inquired, rather excitedly and with some degree of haste.

"The last train goes in about half an hour," the landlord informed. "But, I am anxious to know what has happened to ye, my young man."

"What's happened!" cried Billy. "I've seen the ghost!"

"What, have you been to Granton Graveyard and back already?"

"Yes, sir, I have."

"Then you must have traveled, that's all. That horse must be as wet and limp as a dishcloth!"

"Yes, I guess it is, for I have not spared it. You had better let your man see to it at once. I'm off for that train."

"No, hold on a minute. Come in here. Plenty of time. Joe, see to the horse right away. Plenty of time, young man, to get the train. Come in and tell me what you saw."

"I don't want to miss that train."

"No danger. You can spend fifteen minutes here, and still have loads of time to catch it."

"Well, I don't mind stopping to tell you, then."

The landlord finished putting up his shutters, and that done, led the way into the bar room.

Some three or four loungers were still there, fellows who had been present when Billy started.

"Let me give you a bracer," the landlord proposed, stepping behind the bar and laying hold upon a bottle.

"Not a drop!" refused Billy, firmly, wav-

ing his hand. "I have never tasted it, and don't mean to begin now, ghost or no ghost."

"Hello! You are a temperance chap, hey?"

"I don't look much like a drinking fellow, do I?"

And he certainly did not, for he was the very picture of blooming health. In his twenty-second year, he had the freshness of a youth of seventeen.

"Well, no, you don't look like a soak, that's sure enough," the landlord had to admit. "But come, tell us about that ghost ye saw, and what ye think of it. Have you had enough of it?"

"Plenty," answered Billy, briefly. "I don't think you'll see me in those parts right away again. I don't want any ghosts in mine when I know it, and I know it this time hard and fast. I have been warned to keep away, and I think I'll heed the warning."

"Warned?"

"Yes; was told to drop the case, as nothing but death awaited me if I went on with it, or words to that effect."

"And the ghost told you that?"

"Yes. And there were more more than one ghost, too, for I heard all manner of wild laughter floating in the air, and you can bet I turned and kicked up a dust to get back here again. If anybody asks you anything about it, you can tell them the facts. I am not hunting ghosts to-night, thank you. If you want to set me down for a coward, all right."

"That's what most folks will do, me son."

"Let them. I have a due respect for a whole skin, and have a strong desire to keep mine so."

"There is sense in that; but, from what I have read about you, youngster, I thought you must be clear grit all the way through. Thought it would take more than a ghost to frighten you off."

"Well, newspaper reputation is one thing, you know."

"If you see it in the newspaper it's so, though; or anyhow they claim it is."

"Yes, I know they do, and sometimes it is so; but I am modest in my claims to greatness, you see."

"And you ain't no ghost-hunter," remarked one of the loungers.

"Not just now, thank you," answered Billy.

All laughed.

"Well, what's your opinion about that ghost, anyhow?" the landlord urged, in his deep, base voice.

"My opinion of ghosts does not amount to much," Billy made response. "I have had a very small opinion of ghosts in general, but of this Granton ghost in particular I don't want any further acquaintance."

All laughed again.

"By the way," spoke Billy, "if my friend Bardner asks for me to-morrow you may tell him just how it was."

"Oh, yes, I'll tell him, sure," the landlord promised.

Billy betook himself to the station.

"It is just about what I expected of him," the landlord remarked, when he had gone. "He looks smart enough, but you can't expect to find a man's head on a boy's shoulders."

"That's so," one of the loungers agreed. "And that ghost is enough to scare any man, no matter how big he is."

And the others agreed in that.

On the same train that had brought Billy out from the city that afternoon, were a man and woman in whom we shall take interest.

The man was about thirty years of age—not a day younger, anyhow, well dressed and not lacking in good looks.

His companion, the woman, was younger, maybe twenty four.

the
cle At first glance they might have been taken for man and wife, but a close observer would have soon decided otherwise.

They had met at the ferry, and in the train occupied one seat as far as the Junction, when, after changing cars, the man went into another car and they did not exchange recognitions afterward.

The woman was well dressed, fair looking, and her face showed intelligence and her speech no lack of education.

When they had taken their seat in the car, on beginning their journey, the woman asked:

"Well, what success?"

"Excellent," the man made answer.

"And so had I," the woman rejoined, "though I don't know whether it amounts to anything or not."

"You followed him, then?"

"Yes, as well as a woman could. It would have been better had not the dread of recognition stood in our way."

"No doubt it would, but still I found no trouble in following the woman. She came to the city for the purpose of employing a detective, and was successful in finding one."

"Do you think he is one to be feared?"

"It was no other than Broadway Billy, you have read about in the papers more or less."

"Then there is danger ahead, is there not?"

"Not for us."

"And why not for us, if danger at all?"

"Because, what can he do? He will be baffled, the same as others have been. The job will try his grit, I tell you."

"Do you know when he is going to begin the work?"

"He is on this train."

"Indeed?"

"Yes. But, what about your work? Did you find out anything to his hurt? Or anything that you could use to your advantage?"

"Nothing. He came here on business, that was plain enough, and when that was done he idled away the time till he came down to the ferry. I had success in following him, but little in learning anything."

"Then he, too, is on this train?"

"Yes."

"I'll see if I can find him. No matter if he should recognize me, I have all the rights here he can have."

He left his seat and walked through the train, and upon returning, reported that he had found the man in conversation with the detective. How they had come to know each other did not appear.

CHAPTER VII.

TAKING UP THE NEW CASE.

BROADWAY BILLY arrived at his office about an hour late on the following morning.

He found Harry and Seth there awaiting him, and both eager to learn what he had accomplished, though Harry was the only one to show it.

"We have been waitin' for you, boss," Harry assured, the moment Billy entered. "We knew ye had got home, but mother said she wouldn't call you till you got up yourself."

"I was late getting in, and took an extra hour or so. Well, sit down and I will tell you the little I have learned."

So Billy gave his apprentices the main points of his night's adventures.

"Christopher Columbia!" ejaculated Harry. "Didn't I say there might be a ghost in the case? We have tackled ghostseys before, and I guess we'll tackle this one."

"Yes, you are right we will," asserted the chief. "My getting frightened off was a blind, as of course you understand."

"We understand that. But, boss, see this here!"

He gave Billy the message that had been left for him by the man who had come in soon after his going away on the previous afternoon.

"This is a queer note," Billy observed, as he read it. "It is more like a telegram."

"That's jest what Seth and I said. And that's why we called it a sham."

"As I certainly think it is."

The boys then gave their chief a full account of the visitor, as well as a description of him.

"But, one of you followed him, did you not?" Billy asked.

"Oh, sure!"

"Well?"

"He went to the ferry," Harry informed, "and there he fell in with a woman and they took the train for Brisbane."

"Took the train at the ferry, eh?" Billy criticized. "Things have changed at the ferries—"

"Oh, you know what I mean," Harry interrupted. "I crossed the ferry with 'em, to give it to ye right down, and I saw 'em take the same train you did."

"Ah! that is getting at it in better shape. Did they appear to pay any attention to me?"

"The man had his eye on you, and there was another fellow that the woman seemed to have interest in."

Broadway Billy was thoughtful.

"What are you going to do?" asked Seth.

"What would you do, were you chief?"

"Wonder you wouldn't ask me what I'd do, once in awhile," complained Harry; but it was only a joke, as his smiling and happy face betrayed.

"Very well, what would you do?"

Billy turned the question upon him so quickly that Harry was trapped.

"Why, I think I'd lay my plans for going out there in disguise to begin the business in dead earnest."

"Just what I'm going to do. Now, Seth, your say."

"Well," spoke the Silent Shadower, "I think I'd go to Hartford in response to this message."

"My own idea exactly," Billy admitted. "There is a big combination here somewhere, and now that we have begun to play into their hands we'll play right on and let them have all the rope they want."

"But you won't waste time to go clear to Hartford?" questioned Harry.

"We start for there at once," was Billy's answer. "Get ready our things, and while you are doing that I'll write some letters."

"Guess I see through it," Harry remarked. "We'll go there on a blind, but bend our trail toward Brisbane. Are you going to telegraph, as the man wanted you to do, boss?"

"Yes; since that is a part of their plan, we'll fall in with it. Just ring up a messenger."

Their preparations went forward at once, with careful haste, and when a messenger came a telegram was sent to the address given by the man, saying the combination would take the train at eleven o'clock.

A notice was posted on the office door, stating that the detective had gone to Hartford, but would be back again in a few days.

That done, the trio set out.

Billy posted several letters at the nearest box, and at eleven o'clock they were on a train and rolling out from the Grand Central.

The talkative Harry had had but little to say, for him, up to this time, since leaving the office.

He was now able to hold in no longer.

"Christopher Columbia!" he exclaimed. "You ain't really goin' to Hartford, are ye, boss?"

"That's where we are bound for, Harry," Billy assured.

"But, I thought it was only a sham."

"It does not look like it, does it?"

"No, bless me if it does. But, you mean to get off at some way-station and turn back."

"No, we are going through, the same as we telegraphed, and we are going to take the case, if we find there is one to take. What do we want to be hunting ghosts for?"

There was, however, a merry twinkle in Billy's eyes.

Silent Seth was as sphinx-like as ever.

"Crackers an' cheese!" Harry expostulated. "You will have a funeral on your hands the first thing you know, boss. I can't never stand this fever that's ragin' in my blood if we drop one ease to take up another. Stop the train, and let me go back and tackle that job alone!"

Billy laughed, and explained his plans in full to his spirited "team."

The trip to Hartford was without incident worthy of mention, and certainly without one that has to do with our story.

Arriving at their destination, they immediately sought the address that had been given by the man who had called at the office in the absence of the young chief. And their man was in.

The office was on the second floor of a business building, and a sign indicated that it was something in the way of a banking and broking concern. One man was in charge, and by a signal agreed upon, Harry and Seth conveyed to their chief the intelligence that this was not the person who had called at the office in New York.

"Are you Henry Rubert, sir?" Billy answered.

"I am," was the prompt answer.

"Well, I am Detective Weston, from New York."

"Ha! as I thought. May I have the honor of shaking hands with you?"

The man put out his own hand in a fawning way, and Billy allowed him to take his.

"You are welcome to do that, if you consider it an honor," he said.

"And these are your helpers?"

"Yes."

"I must shake hands with them, too. I have heard all about you, boys, and I am proud to have this great pleasure, I assure you."

"Don't gush too much," advised Happy Harry. "We are young, and it might spoil us, you know."

The man laughed.

"Well, sit down, sit down," he invited.

"We will talk over the matter for which you have been called here. In the first place, do you ask your pay in advance? If you do—"

"No, don't mention that," Billy waived.

"Wait till we have earned the money and then we'll settle."

"Very well, if that suits you. My partner was going to the city yesterday, and I told him he had better employ you, if he could, and send you on here at once."

"Well, here we are."

Billy had been looking around the office in his casual manner, but taking in everything he saw.

He was scarcely satisfied that the office was just what it pretended to be, for such a business is usually carried on upon the ground floor and open to the street. It looked like a policy shop.

Still, there were a safe and banking furniture, and he admitted to himself there was plenty of room for a mistake on his part.

"I suppose my partner told you what was wanted, did he not?" Mr. Rubert made inquiry.

"He said it was a mysterious case, robbery and murder together."

"Yes, that was it. You see; the janitor of this building was found dead in the lower hall one day last week, on the same morning that we found our safe had been robbed. We connect the two matters."

"Have the police taken the case?"

"Yes, the janitor's death, but not the robbery, we thought it best to keep that a secret for a time."

"What was your reason?"

"We thought the chances for discovering the guilty one might be made better. Only my partner and I know of it."

"How much was stolen?"

"About six thousand dollars."

"Not a very rich haul, then. Still, quite a loss to a small business."

"Our business is not so small as you would think, judging only from the place in which you discover our office. Still, six thousand dollars is six thousand dollars, and we feel it."

"Have you no clue?"

"None at all, and it is a mystery."

"It looks to be. Give me all the particulars you can, and I'll weigh them and see what I make of it."

CHAPTER VIII.

SPLITTING UP THE FORCES.

We have not space to spare to give in detail their further conversation upon the matter.

The case was, as briefly as possible, that the safe in the broker's office had been robbed of six thousand dollars, and there was no clue to the thief.

The door of the office and the safe door had been found unlocked, on the same morning on which the colored janitor had been found dead in the lower hall, and the money gone. Who was the robber?

No clerks were employed in the office, the two brokers doing their own business. They were single men, roomed together, and it was not possible that one had robbed the other. And there was no clue to who had killed the janitor, if he had been killed at all.

The police had called his death accidental, and so the coroner had pronounced it. The jury agreed that he must have fallen from the top of the stairs with a hod of ashes—ashes being all over the stairs from top to bottom—and so broken his neck. It could hardly have been called anything else, but Mr. Rubert was inclined to connect the two cases in one.

Billy gained all the information he could, and took his leave.

He had spent an hour or more in the office, and the conversation had been at great length.

In going, he said he would take the matter in hand, but secretly, working in disguise, and if nothing was seen or heard of him and his helpers for some days, nothing must be thought of that.

Would he remain in Hartford, then?

Well, it would not look reasonable that he could work upon the case anywhere else.

Upon leaving the office Billy and boys went to a hotel of modest pretensions, where Billy registered for all under false names.

Soon after taking their room, Billy went alone and in disguise to Police Headquarters, where he made himself known and where he was closeted with the chief for a considerable time.

When he returned to the hotel he found Happy Harry lying at length on two chairs, with a wet towel on his head and fanning himself with a feather.

"Hello!" he exclaimed. "What's the matter, Harry?"

"Fever," Harry gasped. "Detective fever!"

"The fever of curiosity, rather, I imagine," Billy rejoined, laughing.

"It's all the same," avowed the smiling and mischievous Harry, sitting up and quitting his nonsense. "It was curiosity that made a detective of you."

"Well, I guess you are right; and, I

know what this fever is of which you complain, for I have had it many a time myself. But, where does it trouble you most just now?"

"Why, we're dyin', Seth and me, to know what you have found out."

"Sit down, then, Seth, if that's the case, and I'll tell you both what has taken place."

"Seth, who never shows what he feels and never feels what he shows," Harry commented. "The sealed sphinx, the tongueless mummy, the—"

"The chatterbox and rattlebrain of the combination," Seth finished.

"Hello! it spoke!" exclaimed Harry.

"Come, now, drop your nonsense, if you want to hear what I have to say," the chief commanded. "We must be up and doing, you know."

Seth had taken a seat, and Harry held his peace.

"You boys were right in your estimate of that man and his message," Billy began.

"We have been drawn here on a fool's errand, but we are not the fools, as it happens."

"That's good, anyhow."

"But we are going to fool somebody else, if nothing breaks about the harness before we get through with the case. There is something rotten in the State of Denmark—or rather in New Jersey—and it's so terribly rotten that the scent of it is noted away over here in Conn."

"What does it smell like?" asked Harry.

"Jail-birds, of some stripe or other, with a ghost to flavor the aroma."

"But what is it here? You are not helping my fever the least bit, and the first you know—"

"It's impossible to help you, if you don't keep still long enough to take the medicine. Take example from Seth, now—"

"And shut myself up in my shell like—"

"Look out," Seth warned.

"Now, listen," and Billy spoke seriously.

"It was true that the janitor of that building was found dead one morning, but he was an old man, and it was as clear as anything that he simply fell and broke his neck. That is all there is to that part of the mystery."

"And the robbery?"

"I do not believe there was any robbery, and the chief of police agrees with me. If there had been, it would have come out at once, for such a man as this one we talked with could not have kept it quiet. And there would have been no reason for his doing so. It's simply a lie, first to last."

"What was the object in it?" questioned Seth.

"To bring us here and lead us to fool away time, I think. I can see no other good reason."

"And the whole thing connects with that missing man at Granton, do you think?"

"Yes, so I think."

"Then may he not be here in Hartford?" questioned Harry.

"It is possible that he is, and I am going to leave you boys here to carry on this part of the scheme."

"Ha! now I feel better!" confessed Harry.

"The fever breaks with the prospect of business ahead, and if we don't make things jingle, Seth and me, it will be because the jeeb is not jeebing any more!"

"You want us to pretend to carry on the case here?" asked Seth.

"No pretending about it; I want you to carry it out to the letter," Billy assured.

"And what if they demand to know where you are?" asked Harry.

"Tell them the truth, that I am working under cover, but will come out on top all in good time."

"But," argued Seth, "if there has been no robbery, they will want to know what progress you are making, in order to know just how badly they are blinding you."

"I leave it to you and Harry to stuff them full."

"And we can do it, you bet!" Harry cried.

"You must take care what you do," Billy said further, "and I have made it all right with the chief of police so that you can go to him if you need help or protection."

"I'll tell ye what has been bobbing in my thinker," offered Harry.

"Well, what is that?"

"It isn't often I think, for I'm all the while talking and don't have time, but this is one thing I have thunk. That maybe we have been called here for the purpose of being trapped."

"They haven't done it yet, if so."

"If we could only know what the combination is," said Silent Seth, "whether it is big or little, great or small, then we could tell something more about it, as it is, we are in the dark."

"But, we won't be there long," encouraged Billy.

"Unless they put out our lights and leave us in the dark altogether," chipped in Harry.

"We must take care they don't do that. But, now to the point. You boys are to use your best efforts here, and learn all about this man Rubert and his business. And, when his partner returns, if he does, shadow him, too."

"You bet!"

"And report to me by letter daily to the office— Ha! here is another thought that pops up. I shall need one of you at the office, so that I can have one at my immediate call. Which shall it be?"

"You have got me all cocked and primed for staying here," declared Harry.

"Then you shall stay, and Seth can return."

It was all the same to Seth, so far as anything of his thoughts could be told by his countenance.

"So it must be," Billy decided. "That will balance us nicely for the beginning, and we'll be able to keep our grip upon any thing that comes up—"

"Will you let me say something?" asked Seth.

"Hello!" cried Harry. "Look out for somethin' brainy now, boss. He never speaks unless he has got somethin' to say."

"What is it?" Billy inquired.

"If I go back to the office, somebody on the watch there might report it to the crooks, and the fat would be in the fire."

"You can assume a disguise."

"And that won't be comfortable to wear all the time, either. I was going to say, let Fatty Skinny take the office—"

"Just the thought!" admitted Billy. "That is what I'll do. I do not possess all the brain of the combination, by any means, boys. You—"

"Seth has got a double share," said Harry; "his own and mine."

"Then you have been robbing somebody else," Seth retorted.

That plan was finally agreed upon, and arrangements were laid in full, as far as was possible at that time.

Billy remained with his boys as long as he could, and when he took his leave it was to go out in a disguise that no one could possibly suspect, when he went to the depot and returned to New York.

As on the previous night, Billy got only a few hours' rest, for it was very late when he reached home, but he was astir at his usual hour.

Giving his mother and step-father the particulars of the case in hand while at breakfast, he set out to find Fatty-Skinny.

He was at his store, and was the same Skinny of old, in spirit, though there was more of him in bulk.

Billy explained what was wanted, and giving him the key of the office, went on to Brisbane.

Now the battle would begin in earnest, and it remained to be shown which side would win.

CHAPTER IX.

BARDNER MAKES A BARGAIN.

DURING the forenoon of the day following the hasty retreat of Broadway Billy from Brisbane, Dick Bardner dropped into the hotel to see his friend the landlord.

Mr. Priceley was on hand, as rotund and smiling as ever, and when he spoke, his deep voice brought forth a ring from the glasses on the shelves.

"Good morning, Dick," he greeted. "Dropped in to hear the news, I s'pose, hey?"

"Yes, thought I'd see if that young detective has got back yet."

"Ha, ha, ha! Yes, he got back in haste before I closed up for the night, and the horse was about winded."

"You don't say! What was the matter? See the ghost?"

"That was just it, he seen the ghost."

"Where is he now?"

"Back in New York. He took the last train. Said he had had enough of this sort of thing. Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, that beats all. I thought he had more grit than that. It must be that his great reputation has been built up on wind, I guess."

"Yes, I guess so, too. There is no sand in him, that is a sure thing, or he would never have scared off so easy. But, he is done, and Haswick is no nearer to being found than before."

"And it's too bad, too. Not that I liked the man, for I didn't, but all the same I would like to have the mystery solved and have it made known what became of him that night. But, the way it looks now, I am afraid it will never be cleared up."

"So am I. Dave was a fine fellow, Dick, and I understand why you didn't like him. You are a man, though, and if the girl loved him and didn't love you, take it like a man and say nothing. You couldn't both have her, that's sure. With him out of the way, though, you may stand a show. Don't ye see?"

The young man paled at the mention.

"It places me in a bad position, Priceley," he responded. "I can't do anything till the mystery is cleared away, you know. And if it isn't cleared, I should have to wait a long time for the wound to heal in the girl's heart. If the fellow has been killed, I wish it could be proved, and so set the matter at rest. I think there would be a chance for me, then, in time."

"Well, go ahead and prove it, then."

"I only wish I could!"

"S'pose I put a flea in your ear, how will that suit you?"

"I'm open to any suggestion you may see fit to make, Priceley. If you can help me I'll not forget the kindness."

"Well, then, see here," leaning over the bar and speaking in lower tone, "I would say do this. You go over to Granton and have a talk with Gretna, and tell her you will help if she will allow it."

"She wouldn't object to that."

"But, tell her the condition."

"What would that be?"

"That after awhile, she would receive your attentions again."

"Provided we didn't find Haswick alive, eh? If I found him alive, and fetched him back, that would cook my goose."

"It might not, Dick."

"I don't see how it could work otherwise."

"Why, it would be a generous act on your part, and might be your winning card in the game."

"Do you think so?"

"Yes, I do."

"I believe I will try it, then."

"You can't do better, and if it comes out that Dave has done anything wrong, then you would stand next to win. Not that I

believe anything of the sort of Dave, you understand."

"I'll do it. Get me out a rig and I'll go at once. I won't wait to go home for my own horse."

"That's the talk. If Dave is dead, then I hope you'll win."

"I may stand a chance, if that fellow Lycurgus don't come into the field again."

"There will be no show for him. Old man Granton would put the veto to that move, quick, you bet!"

"And that is the very thing that might spoil my chances. Woman is a contrary being, you know, and hates opposition."

"Yes, that's so."

"Granton favored my suit, you know, and urged Gretna to marry me, but she was determined to give herself to Haswick."

"It would be a good thing to put up a job on Lycurgus."

"How could that be done?"

"Why, a woman could be found who, for good pay, would come out here from the city and claim to be his wife, and raise a nice scandal. See?"

"What a plotter you are, Priceley! I wouldn't have believed it was in you, on my word. That would be a big joke, wouldn't it? But it would have to be done with care."

"Of course."

"For, if the woman was caught, she might give me away, and then there would be the mischief to pay."

"It would have to be timed so that she could come when he was not at home, and he couldn't face her in the lie. It would kill his prospects here dead as a rock."

"You are right, you are right! I'll think about that, and maybe I'll act on it. But don't give me away, will you?"

"Naw; what do you take me for?"

"All right."

The landlord ordered out the rig, and in a few minutes Dick Bardner was spinning along on the road to Granton.

His thoughts were busy along the way, and the time passed so quickly that he was at the Granton Graveyard before he knew it. And as he descended the hill he mused, half aloud.

"This Granton ghost is a mystery, truly. I never believed in ghosts, but a fellow has to believe what he sees with his own eyes; no getting around it. I am in no hurry to see it again, either. I'm no coward, but it gave me a creepy sensation that I can feel yet."

He looked at the old vault, and at the great old tree that overshadowed it, in passing.

"It may be that a murder has been done here sometime," he further mused, "and this ghost is the spirit of the victim. Who can tell? But the strange light and the many voices of the air—how are these to be accounted for? Pshaw! it is nonsense for me to try to guess the mystery. Let him solve it who will, I don't want to do it; I am not in that line."

The cemetery was passed, yet he glanced back at it again as if half-expecting the ghostly form to appear. And as he looked, the ruins on the other side and to the rear of the cemetery caught his eye.

"And there, too, is another mystery," he said to himself. "Who and what is the Mad Chemist, as they call him? It matters little, I suppose. That he is mad is not to be doubted, for only a madman would dream of making gold out of iron, and that is what he is trying to do, they say. I wish he would succeed, if he would then go away and take Lycurgus with him; no harm to him in such a wish as that, I'm sure. Ha, ha, ha!"

A little later he rode into Granton.

It was a neat and lively village for its size, and as he passed between the two great mills on the banks of the creek, the

spacious grounds of Granton Manor broke upon his sight.

Around these the village clustered as if for support, and indeed their dependency was there, since the Grantons owned the mills and the mills were the life of the place. The open roadway into the grounds was just ahead, and into that Bardner turned and dismounted.

A man from the stable ran to take his horse, and the door was opened by Mrs. Granton in a most hospitable manner, she having seen his approach.

"I am most pleased to see you," she greeted.

"As am I, to find you looking so well, Mrs. Granton. Is Gretna at home?"

"Yes, she is at home, Richard. I will tell her you wish to see her; I am sure she will be pleased."

"She may not be pleased," Bardner remarked.

"I understand you, Dick," Mrs. Granton rejoined. "But, she knows her father's wishes, and it is her business to be pleased."

It was said firmly but not unkindly.

They had entered the spacious hallway, and now the lady led the way into the parlor.

There they talked for a few minutes, when, excusing herself, Mrs. Granton went out to find her eldest daughter and inform her of the caller.

In a little while Gretna entered the room.

Bardner rose to greet her, and she offered her hand in a friendly way.

"I have called to see you upon a matter of special import, special to me at any rate," the young man said, after the exchange of greetings.

A pained look came upon the face of the girl.

"I hope you are not going to bring up the forbidden subject, Mr. Bardner, and least of all at a time like this," she spoke.

"No, only in a secondary way," she was assured. "I have come to offer my help in the search for Mr. Haswick, if you will accept such poor help as I can give."

"That is good of you; but, I thought you were doing all you could."

"I have not been straining myself any, Gretna. You can understand that I have no reason to love David Haswick."

"Nor have you reason to hate him, Dick."

"I suppose not. But, it is just here: I will do all in my power to solve the mystery and find him, upon one simple condition."

"And what is that?"

"It is this. That if we find him dead, or find that he has disgraced himself and you, that you will, in due time, receive my attentions with the view to marriage. Will you agree to that?"

"Yes, I will agree to that, Dick—I do agree to it."

"Then he shall be found!"

CHAPTER X.

THE ENGLISH AGENT.

BARDNER offered his hand, and the young woman accepted it.

There was a moment of silence, and Gretna was the one to break it, with the question.

"But, what if David is found alive and well, and not in disgrace? You will then withdraw and leave us to our love?"

"I will," was the prompt answer. "I will prove to you that I am a man of honor, Gretna, and that I am in some degree worthy of your respect and confidence."

"I thank you."

"But, what of Mr. Lycurgus?"

"I know nothing about him, Dick, nor do I care to know!"

"Then, should we learn the worst about David, you will not allow him to take the place of rival to me?"

"I will not. But, all this is painful to me, at this time. I do not love you, as you

know; I never did love you; and it may be a long time before I could forget the man I do love and receive your attentions."

"I can be patient."

Again the young woman gave him her hand for a moment.

He had touched her woman's heart in the right place, and she could not but appreciate him.

"Now, what will you do?" she asked.

"In the first place, employ a good and able detective."

The girl gave a slight start.

"I had rather you would not do—"

She stopped.

"I understand what you would say, and your reason for it," said Bardner. "I know whom you employed, and I know also that he has already given up the task."

"How—how could you know?"

"He told it himself. He came out to Brisbane last night, and started to ride over here. He saw the ghost, though, and got back to New York again without loss of time."

"Is it possible?"

"It is the fact."

"And you know who it was?"

"Yes; Billy Weston, better known as Broadway Billy."

"I cannot deny it, for I did employ him; but, it does not look reasonable he would give up so easily."

"Nevertheless it is the fact, and the case is still open. So, as I said, I will employ a good detective, and will aid him all in my power toward a solution of the mystery."

"Well, I am only a woman, and of course you must know what is for the best. Solve the mystery, Dick, and I will be your friend for life."

"And, maybe more than friend."

"Maybe."

"It is enough. I will set about it as soon as possible, and whatever the result, I will abide by it."

"Thank you, thank you."

That did not end the conversation, by any means, but there ends our immediate interest in it, so there we may drop it.

Bardner spent some time at Granton, had a talk with Stanwood Granton, and at last set out upon his return for Brisbane. And as he rode along his mind was busy with the matter.

"It is a strange case," he said to himself. "I cannot understand it. I wonder if it is possible that Granton himself is at the bottom of it, and that he has in some way caused the disappearance of Haswick to balk the marriage he opposed?"

The thought stuck, and when Bardner reached Brisbane he could not help mentioning it to his friend the landlord.

"It is just possible," Priceley agreed.

"But, if there has been foul play I don't take no stock in it, for Granton ain't that kind of a man."

"Well, whatever the secret is, I am going to try to get at the bottom, for I have taken it upon myself to solve it if I can. That plan you suggested is going to work."

"Good! I'm glad to hear it. Go in to win, my boy! But really and honestly, I hope Dave will be found alive and well, after all."

The face of the young man paled as it had done once before.

"I don't," he declared, "and I'm honest enough to say so. I hope we'll find his dead body, for nothing else will open the way for me."

He left the room with that, and Priceley looked after him and shook his bullet head.

"A bad case, a bad case," he said to himself, softly.

On the following day a stranger dropped down in Brisbane, making his appearance at the hotel.

He was a young Englishman, as he said himself and as it was thought of him, one

well-educated and who could manipulate his aitches.

He did not make known his business until after he had had dinner, when he engaged Landlord Priceley in conversation.

"Do you know any place near here called the Ruins?" he inquired.

The landlord looked at him closely for a moment before replying, and then he rumbled out his answer.

"Yes, I do," he said.

"Where is it?"

"On the road from here to Granton, not far from that place."

"How far from here?"

"Over seven miles."

"I did not think it was so far. But, distance does not matter."

"Might I ask what interest *you* have in the Ruins, Mr. Kyne?" the landlord made inquiry.

The young Englishman had registered as Hartly Kyne.

"Why, certainly, sir," he answered. "It is no secret, I am sure. In fact, I expected to make my business known openly. You see, sir, I am agent for Sir Henry Dufferin, who wants to establish a country seat, and he has heard of this place called the Ruins and I have come out to examine it and buy it if I can."

"Oh, I see."

"Do you think the place can be bought?"

"I hardly think it can, sir."

"That is unfortunate, if I find the place would suit m'lord. If it is a ruins one would think it might be bought cheap."

"It is a ruins only in name, now, for it has been all fixed up."

"Ay, I see. Then it is already occupied in the manner in which m'lord would make use of it."

"Can't say about that, but it's occupied. If your lord would make use of it the same as the present owner does he would be set down for crazy, that's all I want to say."

"Indeed! Then there is something about the place and its owner that is not right with good sense?"

"You have hit it."

"Do you mind telling me?"

"Why, no; of course not. The present owner is called the Mad Chemist."

"Mad Chemist? Well, that smacks of the romantic, I declare. M'lord is wild over everything that is romantic."

"Then he had better come out and make the acquaintance of this Mad Chemist, and take rooms at the Ruins. Then, there is a ghost out there, too."

"A ghost!"

"Yes."

"You are joking, are you not?"

"Not a bit of it. There is a graveyard near the Ruins, and a ghost prowls around there almost every night."

"Delightful, pon honor! That will just suit m'lord, and I must see the place and buy it if I can. I must not miss this chance for getting a romantic old place."

"Well, it won't cost you much to go out and see it, but I have my doubts about your being able to buy it."

"What is the name of this mad fellow?"

"Gaspar Germain."

"I will remember the name. Is he a Frenchman?"

"Yes, French."

"What more can you tell me about the Ruins?"

"That is about all, I guess. It was a place that was built before the Revolution, and it was a ruins in fact when this Frenchman took hold of it."

"How long has he had it?"

"Three or four years, all told."

"And he is really mad?"

"Well, if he ain't mad he is the next thing to it."

"And that is—"

"A fool."

"What has given him that reputation?"

"Why, he is a chemist, and he is trying to make gold out of iron and other stuffs."

"Ha, ha, ha! Well, he is mad, then, true enough. I suppose he has wife and family with him? But, no, maybe not, for that would not be in accord with his hobby."

"No, there is no woman at the place at all. He has some men helpers, who work a little on the place and a little in his shop, or whatever sort of place he has for his fool-business."

"I see, sir, I see. He talks English, I suppose."

"Well, maybe he does by this time, but he didn't when he first came here, and the men who put the Ruins in shape for him were Frenchmen, too."

"They are with him still?"

"No, they went back to their own country, I believe, when he was done with them. He has one American, a sort of secretary or something in that line, whose name is Lycurgus."

"Then he would be the person for me to talk with?"

"The very man, I should say, sir. You will find him at the Ruins, probably, or if not, he will be at Granton pretty certain."

CHAPTER XI.

TAKEN UPON SUSPICION.

THIS conversation between the landlord and the Englishman was carried on to some length, or until the latter had gained about all the information regarding the Ruins the landlord was able to give.

A little later the Englishman was on his way to Granton, with one of Landlord Priceley's men driving.

"What is your name, my man?" the Englishman asked, as they rode along.

"Jack West, sir."

"As good a name as you could have, Jack, my lad. What do you know about the place we are going to?"

"Not much of nothin', sir."

"Ever been there?"

"Oh, yes."

"Ever see the Mad Chemist?"

"Yes, sir."

"What manner of man is he?"

"Well, a sort o' mildish man, with a close-fit cap and a gown, sir."

"Look crazy?"

"Well, yes; there is a kind of offish look about his eyes, I should say, at a short look at him."

"Do you know the man who works for him?"

"You mean Fred Lycurgus? Oh, yes; I know him. He is a sport, and likes a fast horse once in a while if he is on a lark."

"Good sort of fellow, then, I take it. I guess I will have no trouble to make friends with him. What does he think of his employer? But, I suppose he does not tell that."

"Yes, he tells, and he thinks he's a fool. Him and the rest of the men play him for a sucker for all he's worth. They don't do two hours' work a day. And the old coot never knows any better, either. I'd like to work for him myself, you can bet. I guess he pays good, too."

"There will be different arrangements there if I buy the place for Sir Henry Dufferin, for he is a man who cannot be imposed upon. But, that is nothing to you, of course. What do you think my chances are for buying it?"

"That I couldn't say, not knowin' nothin' about it, sir."

In that strain went their conversation till they came to Granton Graveyard, when the driver remarked:

"There is a ghost here, sir."

"Ha: this is the place, eh? Your employer told me something about it. Just stop by the gates there, will you?"

"Yes, seein' that it's daylight, but you couldn't git me to stop there at night fer a farm. And if it was late, then you wouldn't ketch me comin' this road, I tell ye."

"Have you seen the ghost, then?"

"I guess I have!"

"Ah! this is interesting. What is it like?"

"A big white thing, all in a blue smoke, and its voice is enough to raise the hair on your head."

They stopped under the great old tree, and by the gates.

"Where did you see it?" Mr. Kyne asked.

"Right there by the big vault, sir."

"Did it come out of the vault, do you think?"

"I didn't stop to ask it, sir," with a laugh.

"I had business at home, and I got there as soon as I could."

"The door of the vault looks rusty."

"Oh, yes, it is; they say it hasn't been opened in sixty years, and I guess it's so, too. They couldn't get it open now, no-how."

"Well, drive on. I don't care to go ghost-hunting to-day."

The man laughed, and they rode on to Granton, the man pointing out the Ruins as they passed a point where it could be seen.

At Granton inquiry was made for Mr. Lycurgus, and he was found in the village hotel.

The Englishman had his driver put up the horse, being just then unable to say when he would want to return to Brisbane.

He entered the hotel with Lycurgus.

"You are, I am told, in the employ of Mr. Germain, the man who is known here as the Mad Chemist," Billy broke the ice.

"Yes, sir," Lycurgus answered, at the same time favoring the stranger with a searching look.

"I have already introduced myself, and now I will make known my business. I have come to try to buy Mr. Germain's place. Do you think he will sell?"

"You are just in time, sir, for I happen to know that he desires to sell the place."

"Indeed! then I am in luck."

"Yes, if you want the place, you are. Have you seen it?"

"Only from the road, as we came along. Do you know what price will be asked for it?"

"No; but as the man wants to sell as soon as he can, perhaps you can get it at quite a bargain."

"I hope I can, if I find the place suits, or I think it would suit. And let me tell you something, will you?"

"Yes, anything you like."

"If you will use your best efforts to get a low price on it, I'll slip a hundred or so into your hand for your trouble."

"I'll do that. But, who is this Lord Dufferin?"

"I can give you his lineage from away back, if that is what you mean; but I do not think it is, so I'll say simply that he is an Englishman of position and wealth, who intends to settle in this country for a year or two, or during the great Fair."

"Oh! that makes it plain. Well, let's ride out and see the place."

"That is what I would like to do."

Lycurgus provided the conveyance, and in due time they were at the Ruins.

It was a grand old place, or could be made such, with a reasonable outlay of money in addition to what the Mad Chemist had spent.

They entered, a man taking charge of the horse, and the stranger was conducted to a room where the Mad Chemist was found, his black cap on his head and himself deeply buried in books.

"A man to see you about buying the place, sir," the secretary spoke in English.

"Ees zat all?" the chemist asked.

"Yes, that is all."

"Zen sell it to him, but do not bother me in my studies."

"Come with me," the secretary requested, at that, and he led the way to a door on the other side of the room.

The Englishman followed him promptly, and was conducted into a small room that had the appearance of being a sitting-room, or resting-room.

It was neatly furnished, having easy-chairs and lounges, but there was not a book or paper of any kind in it. It was evidently what it appeared, a place of retreat from books and study.

"Sit down," Lycurgus invited, closing the door.

He indicated a chair, and took one himself quite near it.

"You see just how mad the man is, now," he spoke. "He is so deep in his books that I might give away everything he has got and it would be all right."

"He is fortunate in having an honest secretary, I would say," the Englishman remarked.

"Yes, indeed!" laughing. "It would be easy to rob him, if one cared to do that. The other men do play upon him terribly, but he seems not to care."

"Well, he has given you leave to sell the place, I find?"

"Yes; what will you give for it?"

"What do you ask?"

"Twelve thousand dollars, nine thousand to the owner and three to me for the bargain I am offering you."

"It isn't worth it."

"If you don't take it at that figure and on those terms, then the price is fifteen thousand cash, hard money down."

"Whew! And that is the best you will do?"

"The best. Do you want to see the place before you decide?"

"Yes, and then I will report to m'lord. But, I want to make my own bit out of the transaction, don't ye know."

"Make the price thirteen thousand, then, and you can have one. Wait a moment and I'll get help to take you through the place, and let you see just what it is."

"That will work if m'lord will stand it. I'll see what I can do with him. I hope I can trust you not to say anything about this little private understanding between us."

"Of course you can trust me."

The secretary had risen while speaking and moved to the door, and now stepped out into the other room.

The door closed after him with a spring, and the Englishman looked about the room while alone as though taking considerable interest in his surroundings.

As soon as the door had closed the secretary stepped to the Mad Chemist.

"I suspect this fellow," he said.

"Well, make sure, then," was the response.

"And if I find I'm right, what then?"

"We'll hold him."

"All right. I'll trap him now."

"I'll come in when you have done that."

Lycurgus stepped back into the little room again, and sat down as before.

"Mr. Germain will go with us," he spoke.

"Just keep your seat till he comes, if you please."

"Of a sudden, as the fellow spoke, steel arms circled around from behind the heavy, old-fashioned chair in which the Englishman sat, and he was helplessly bound to his seat, barely able to move."

"Wh—what means this?" he gasped, in exclamation. "Wh—what does it mean? I take it you are playing a joke on me."

"No joke about it, Broadway Billy!" was the response. "You are our prisoner for the present. I suspect you, and we are not taking any chances with you, you see. You may as well own up."

"Really, sir, you amaze me," the English-

man gasped. "I don't understand you. Are you, too, mad? You surely must be. What do you mean?"

CHAPTER XII.

IN A TIGHT PLACE NOW.

THE secretary to the Mad Chemist had risen from his chair, and stood peering down into the face of his helpless prisoner.

We have heard from his own lips what his suspicion was, but the man before him certainly did not bear a very striking resemblance to Broadway Billy.

He had reddish hair, a decidedly freckled face, and the clothes he wore bore the unmistakable impress of Piccadilly. And then too, his mannerism of speech was decidedly English.

The Mad Chemist himself came in just then.

"Well?" he demanded, shortly.

"I'll be hanged if I know," Lycurgus had to admit.

"Well, you have done it now, anyhow."

"Yes, you are right, and we'll have to hold him till we can clear ourselves of danger."

"What can you mean?" the Englishman asked, in great alarm now. "What was the reason for making me a prisoner like this? Are you a band of robbers here?"

"Oh, no!" Lycurgus assured. "But, we took you to be a foe of ours, in a disguise, and we wanted to be sure of it before we let you get out of our hands. I suppose you can prove who you are?"

"Why, to be sure, sir. Come with me to New York, where m'lord is stopping, and see what he'll tell you."

"And get ourselves in a fix for this bit of work, eh?"

"How do you mean?"

"Why, you would have us arrested for this trick we have played on you, and there we would be."

"No, 'pon me honor I would not."

"You say so, but that don't make it so. No, we'll have to detain you here a few days, now, till we can attend to a little private business, when you will be set at liberty."

"No, no, good sirs! I cannot remain away over night. M'lord would dismiss me if I did that, and I should be out of a situation."

"What made you suspect the fellow?" the Mad Chemist demanded.

"His eyes. They are too keen for that kind of a face, or that was what I thought about them."

The Mad Chemist himself stepped forward, at that, and looked more closely at the prisoner.

"The eyes of a cow," he said disdainfully.

"You haven't seen them flash," rejoined the secretary. "They are asleep now, as I'd call it."

"Well, it won't be much trouble to see whether the man is in disguise or not, that is certain, for you have seen the other and you ought to decide."

The secretary laid hold upon the prisoner's red hair, at that, and pulled.

It did not yield, and he was about to let go when he felt something give way and off came a wig in his hand.

The hair it disclosed underneath was black, and the freckled face stood out in ridiculous contrast to it. Exclamations of surprise escaped both men, as they looked.

"I was not wrong, after all, you see," Lycurgus cried boastfully. "This is Broadway Billy, in spite of all disguise. We have got you now, you detective bloodhound! Your conning hasn't served you this lay. You have put your foot in it now, sure."

"Do you think so?" was coolly asked.

It was Billy, of course.

"We don't only think it, but we know it. You are not likely ever to go out of here alive."

"Then somebody will have to answer for

my death, for I have been known to come in here," was the quiet defiance.

The two men looked at each other.

"We can fix that," said the Mad Chemist. And he did not speak with any of the French accent now.

"How can we fix it?" asked Lyeurgus.

"You can play his part," was the answer.

"After dark you can go over to Granton in his clothes and make-up, and ride back again to Brisbane with the man who brought him over. That will clear us."

"Ha! just the thing. You are a chief, no mistake. That is what we will do, and the world will be well rid of Broadway Billy."

"Call Wun Lung."

The secretary stepped to the door and called, and in a few moments a Chinaman shuffled into the room.

"Here is another boarder for you, Wun Lung," said the Mad Chemist.

The Chinaman grinned.

"And you want to take the best of care that he does not escape, too," the secretary cautioned. "If he does, your life won't be worth a cent."

The Chinaman nodded, but did not respond in words.

"We'll relieve him of his clothes first," announced the Mad Chemist, "and you can find some old rags for him to put on. Clothes won't be of much use to him, for he is going out of society now."

"You needn't take the trouble to look up any clothes for me," Billy spoke up, "for you will find that I have two suits on now."

"Ha! then you are fixed nicely."

His hands were securely tied, then, and he was freed from the chair.

He was then disarmed, a pair of heavy revolvers being found in his hip-pockets, together with handcuffs.

That done, he was freed and ordered to take off his outer suit, which he did promptly enough, having no choice in the matter. He was in the toils.

"Now, there you are!" exclaimed the Mad Chemist. "We will lodge you here for the present, or until we make up our minds what to do with you finally. Take him away, Wun Lung, and see that he don't escape you."

The Chinaman grunted, and laying hold upon Billy, whose hands had been again tied, forced him out of the room and down a flight of stone stairs.

Billy realized that he had fallen into the hands of his foes.

He had considered his disguise about perfect, and had had no fear in coming boldly into the old house as he had done.

Now the question would be, how to get out again.

But, already he had a plan in mind, and the Chinaman was his star of hope!

He had in mind, too, what the Mad Chemist had first said to the Chinaman on his first coming into the room, that he had another prisoner for him.

Who was that other, or the first? Was it the missing David Haswick?

He had some reason to believe that it might be he.

When the bottom of the stone stairs was reached, he was shoved along through a passage to a door, which the Chinaman stopped to open.

Here was a dank, dark room, and into that the young detective was pushed, the Chinaman muttering some incoherent words as he let go his hold upon him, and the door closed.

"Who is that?" asked a voice in a whisper,

"Are you David Haswick?" Billy inquired, before answering.

"Yes, I am he."

"Well, I'm a detective come to rescue you, but I'm in the same fix you are in yourself."

"Then did they trap you?"

"Yes."

"Who are you?"

"Billy Weston, or Broadway Billy."

"Thank God! I am glad that you are here, sir, even though a prisoner, for now I have renewed hope."

"I'm not in condition to be of much use to you, or myself either, just now," Billy had to declare. "Still, the way may open for us after awhile."

"I hope it will."

"Tell me about yourself, how you were trapped, and the reason, and so on."

That the prisoner did, Billy listening with keen interest, and as the story progressed he began to get a new light upon the mystery.

"Does that Chinaman bring your supper to you?" Billy asked, finally.

"Yes," the answer.

"And he brings a light?"

"Yes."

"Then I think I have a plan in mind by which we can get out of here together; I'll try it, anyhow."

Billy then, on his part, told Haswick all that was going on in the world outside, or all that he would be interested to know, at any rate.

In the mean time, above, the Mad Chemist and his secretary were having a talk over the situation.

"I has got to be done," the Mad Chemist declared.

"And at once?"

"Just as soon as possible. That was my plan from the beginning. I must get out, now that the detectives are after me."

"But I can't go with you, for I must win that girl if that be possible."

"You would run the risk of prison for a woman?"

"Yes."

"The more fool you, then!"

"But I cannot be harmed if you get away and keep your secret. I was only your private secretary, you know."

"But if the secret leaks out, good-by to you! Still, by holding fast to this detective and the other fellow, and putting them out of the way, we may get off free."

"That is what we must do. But what about the Hartford lay?"

"We did not fool the fellow any on that. He has come right from there here, and maybe his boys are here, too, by this time."

"No, they are there, for I have heard from the other Henry Rubert. That was a bad slip on our part, and it was a wonder the keen young fellow did not notice it before."

"He noticed it, you may be sure. But after it was made, that was all you could do—to declare yourselves cousins, and both of the same name. There was nothing strange about it, for there are plenty of such instances."

"Yes, I suppose so. But now to rig up as Hartly Kyne, and try to play the role long enough to take the train at Brisbane, when I will soon get back here and all will believe the young Englishman left Brisbane in safety. That is a good scheme, if it can only be carried out."

CHAPTER XIII.

GETTING OUT AGAIN.

It was just after dark when Hartly Kyne reached the hotel at Granton.

Jack West, his driver, was impatient, and had the horse out and ready at the door.

He had no desire to remain later than he could not help, for the thought of the Granton Graveyard ghost troubled him.

"Ha! I find you all ready, do I?" the young Englishman greeted.

"Yes, you bet!" was the response. "I didn't know but what you was goin' to stay all night."

"Oh, no, not quite so bad as that. But, say, friend, would you like to remain late enough to see that ghost as we pass—"

"No, sir! If *you* want to, you kin, but you can't count me in it. If you are ready, we'll go now, and if you ain't I'll put up and we'll stay all night. Just as you say, boss."

"We will go now, then, if that is the case. I was only joking, anyhow, for I want to get a train to the city to-night."

"And we'll have jest about time enough to git the Express, if we don't fool no time away."

"Let's be off, then, at once."

The supposed Englishman got into the buggy, and the driver springing in after him, they were soon speeding along on their return.

When they came to the graveyard the driver touched up the horse a little and showed by that how eager he was to get past the place as soon as possible, even at that early hour.

As they drew near to the gates and the big tree, a bluish light was suddenly seen around and about the vault, and the driver gave a gasp of fright.

"Great Goshen!" he ejaculated. "The ghost!"

"Where?" cried the Englishman, grabbing his companion, as if in terror.

"You'll see it," was the frightened reply. "Git up! Dolly Varden! Git up! I tell ye!"

He applied the whip, and the horse leaped into a run that almost made the light wheels of the buggy hum as they danced along.

Just when they were opposite the vault the ghost was seen, and with a snort of terror the horse increased its speed, to the echo of the voice of the ghost and of wild laughter in the air.

"Beware! Beware!" cried the ghostly voice. "Beware! Beware!"

And the voices above and around them caught up the echo and repeated the warning till they could no longer be heard.

"Merciful goodness!" the Englishman gasped. "I wouldn't live near that place for all the gold in the Bank of England!"

"I should say not," agreed the driver, himself wiping the sweat from his face with his hand. "I never want to see it again."

It took them some time to get the horse down to a moderate pace again, and when they had done so they talked about the ghost.

"No, you can set it down that m'lord won't move out here with my approval," the Englishman declared. "I'll give him such a report of the place that he will never care to see it."

"He wouldn't want to, if he seen that ghost once."

"On the contrary, that might make him all the more eager. I'll give him so discouraging a report about the Ruins itself that he will never care to investigate the matter further."

"Yes, I see."

"Do you think we'll catch that train?"

"Yes, easy, now."

"Good. I must not miss it. Drive me right to the station, and give my regards to the landlord, and tell him I have seen all I want to of the Ruins."

When they entered Brisbane, accordingly, the driver took his passenger to the station direct, and a little time later the Englishman was on his way to New York, and the crime at the Ruins would be covered.

But to return to Billy.

He and the other prisoner, Haswick, passed the time in conversation until the returning of the Chinaman.

It was after dark when he came, some time after dark, and both men were getting decidedly hungry when he put in his appearance, bearing their supper.

"Well, Wun Lung, got here, did you?" questioned Billy.

"He can't talk," explained Haswick, as the Chinaman only grunted in reply.

"No? What's the matter?"

"Had his tongue cut out."

"Whew! That's rough on the Chinese, sure enough. What was that done for? But of course he hasn't told you."

The Chinaman had brought a light, and Billy took a good survey of his face, the Celestial looking at him in a helpless, pitiable way as he did so.

"I'm sorry for you, Wun Lung," Billy spoke. "Can you understand what I say to you?"

The poor fellow grunted, nodding his head that he could.

"Come here and look at this ring, Wun Lung," Billy then invited, holding out his bound hands so that a ring on one finger was plainly shown.

The Chinaman obeyed, and as he looked closely at the ring his face turned pale for a moment, and the next moment he had dropped on the ground before Billy, kissing his feet.

That ring was known to him!*

"Well, I be hanged!" exclaimed Haswick, under his breath.

"We are all right now, if we work with care," assured Billy. "Get up, Wun Lung, and hear what I have to say."

The Chinaman obeyed, and stood before the young detective, his head bowed.

"You can't talk, but you can listen," Billy continued. "Now, was it this madman, so called, who cut out your tongue?"

The nodded answer was yes.

"And that was so that you could not tell what you know about him?"

Yes, again.

"And you serve him only because you fear him and are helpless, depending on his support."

The same.

"But, you hate him—"

The fire that flashed in the Chinaman's eyes was enough.

"Very good. Now, you must help me and this man to escape from here, and we will take you with us."

The slave bowed in submission to the will of a master.

"You know the secrets of this place, of course," Billy went on. "You must this night reveal them to us, and then help us to get out and away. You will be taken care of afterward."

The Chinaman nodded, and at the same time freed the hands of the man he acknowledged master.

"I want you to get my weapons and the handcuffs that were taken from me by the Mad Chemist," Billy further directed. "And, when we have gotten out away from here, our first move will be to go down to New York, taking a train at the nearest station except Brisbane."

"Must I go with you?" asked Haswick.

"Yes, for you must remain in the background until I have trapped the others, or have placed them where they can be entrapped when I make the denouement."

"All right."

"That is all for the present," Billy said to the Chinaman. "Come to us when the right time is at hand and guide us out of here, and you will lose nothing by it. If you fail me, the curse of the ring will rest upon you forever. But, you are not going to fail us. And when the end comes, you shall have sweet revenge upon the man who wronged you."

The Chinaman withdrew, and Billy Haswick ate what he had brought.

"Suppose there is poison in this food," Haswick suggested.

"Have no fear so far as the Chinese is concerned," Billy assured. "This ring is our protection, with him."

"I am eager to know the secret of that ring, Mr. Weston."

So, Billy gave him the account of how it

had come into his possession, and thus they passed the time, talking.

It must have been near midnight when the Chinaman came back again.

The two prisoners were awake to receive him, and he came in with all the stealth of a robber.

He could not speak to them, or make his ideas known otherwise than by signs, but his signs were as plain as words.

He motioned the prisoners to be silent and follow him.

They did so, and he conducted them from the damp cellar and out into a still more damp and dismal passage, along which he led the way, bearing a light in hand.

The passage seemed never ending, and Broadway Billy wanted to inquire of the guide, but that was useless since he could not speak. But, it was not necessary, for he, Billy, already had the secret from Haswick.

At last the end came, the passage terminating in what was clearly a burying vault.

"This is the place I told you about," explained Haswick. "This is the vault by the big tree in the Granton Graveyard."

"Yes, but I was told that the door had not been opened in sixty years, and was so rusty it could not be opened," Billy remarked. "Are you sure there is no mistake about it?"

"No mistake, as you will find. There are other hinges inside here, as you see, and the whole frame is hung as a door so that it is not necessary for the old door to be opened. This improvement was made by Germain, as he is called. But, you will be able to clear up all that is mysterious."

The Chinaman had now opened the door, and the warm and sweet night air came in upon them.

"How will you fasten the door again, Wun Lung?" Billy asked.

The Chinese motioned to a spring lock that would secure itself, and urged them to hasten out.

Out they filed, and the Chinaman, coming last, closed the door after him with a little noise as possible, though it was a practically silent door, being well oiled at the hinges.

That done, they took the road and set forth at a rapid pace in the direction of Brisbane, though not intending to make that their destination. Haswick knew the country well, and said they could reach another station in time to catch the earliest morning train.

CHAPTER XIV.

SPRINGING THE SURPRISE.

MEANTIME, on this same night, Happy Harry and Silent Seth were on their way back to New York.

The man they had been set to shadow had suddenly closed up his business, and as they had been vigilant, they had been able to follow him and take the same train with him, in disguise.

He had been called by a telegram, had taken all the money and papers from his office before starting, and had sold all the office fixtures to a dealer for a very trifling consideration. No further proof was needed that he was going away for good and all.

Needless to tell of their work in detail, now.

On the following morning, at the Ruins, there was great excitement when it was found that the prisoners had escaped!

Wun Lung was missed first, and when he could not be found, then search was made and the truth was revealed. And never was seen a more angry man than was the Mad Chemist then.

"Here is hot to pay!" he cried, stamping around.

"What's going to be done?" asked Lycurgus, with alarm.

"We'll have to get out, as soon as Bradley gets here," was the plan named. "We can't stay longer, now."

"And I can't stay at all, with Haswick at large. He knows who his captor was, and he'll have me yanked up before I know it."

"You have got to stay as long as I do, that you can depend on," said the Mad Chemist, sternly. "You shall not shirk your share of the responsibility that way. You stay here with me; we can hold the fort against any odds. We must not yield."

"I'll tell you what I'll do."

"What's that?"

"Make a bargain with you."

"Let me hear it."

"I'll sign over my share of the profits to you, out and out, if you will let it appear that I had no share in the business, but was simply your secretary, as has been understood here."

"Do you know that means a big loss to you?"

"Yes, I know it does; but, what matters that? I must have that girl, and I am willing to make any sacrifice to get her."

"You are a greater fool than I took you to be."

"If I am, you will be the gainer by my foolishness. You take all the risks, and if you get off whole, all the profits are yours, so far as my share is concerned. What do you say to it?"

"I'll do it."

"Very well, let's have it in writing, then. Shall I draw up a paper in the right form?"

"Yes."

The secretary sat down at a desk and was busy for a few minutes, when he read aloud what he had written.

"Just the thing," cried the Mad Chemist. "Make another copy of it, and we'll sign them both and it will be all straight and no chance for either to kick over the traces afterward."

"All right."

And so the papers were drawn up, and signed, and Lycurgus took his leave from the place, going over to Granton.

There he told that he had been dismissed from the employ of the Mad Chemist, and in conversation with Mr. Granton, hinted that he was open to engage in any situation that would pay well.

From Granton he drove over to Brisbane, where he called upon a young woman at her home.

"Madeline," he said, "it must be now or never with us."

"Why, what is the matter?" the young lady asked, in alarm.

"This is the matter: Haswick is at liberty, and will put in his appearance at any time, almost. You must meet him, deceive him, and marry him."

"But, how?"

"Make him to think you are Gretna Granton."

"Do you think I could do that? He would know me the moment he saw my face, and would despise me."

"Then he must not see your face. Be at Granton to-night, for he will come there—the magnet will draw him, and when he enters the grounds, meet him. Tell him your father has dismissed you from the house, because you will not wed Bardner, and if he would save you he must wed you at once. He'll gladly and blindly do it."

"And then what of you?"

"When Haswick is fast in your power, then I will enter the lists against the banker's son and see if I can't distance him in the race."

"Well, if it is my only chance, I will try it."

"And it is. Once let Gretna and Dave meet, and your chance is lost. Then all our planning will have been in vain you see. It is now or never for you, and the same for me, since your success means my success."

* Read Deadle's Hal -Dime Library, No. 669.

"I will try it. I will go to Granton as soon as night falls, and will take my place in the shadows of the grounds, and there await him."

"Care must be used. With care you can wind Haswick around your finger, so long as he thinks it is Gretna."

"And I'll take care that he does think it is she, for I can personate her, I am sure."

They had further talk, but that was the pith of it all.

It was toward night when Wun Lung, the Chinaman, was discovered gagged and bound in the grounds of the Ruins.

He was found by the coachman, as one of the Mad Chemist's men was known, and was at once released and conducted into the presence of the master of the place.

Another man had arrived at the Ruins by this time, and it was none other than the man from Hartford, the one whom Harry and Seth had been shadowing successfully; and these two, by the way, were not far off.

The two men were in conversation when the Chinaman was brought in.

With an angry oath the Mad Chemist leaped to his feet, laid hold upon the Chinese and gave him a shaking.

"Give an explanation of this, curse you!" he hissed. "How came those prisoners to get out of your hands? Where have you been? How did they get help?"

The Chinaman only mumbled and muttered, but was unable to speak.

"Free his hands and let him make signs," suggested the other man.

"Yes, and then I'll make a sign for him," the Mad Chemist declared. "And it will be one he won't escape, either."

"Let's get all the information we can out of him, first."

"Oh, to be sure."

The Chinaman's hands were freed, with that, and again did the Mad Chemist demand the explanation of all that had taken place.

Quicker than thought the arms of the supposed Celestial shot out, and in each fist was a revolver.

"Puttee uppee hands!" he ordered. "Blazes!" cried the amazed men. "What means this?"

"Allee samee means you are my plisoners," said the Chinese, meekly.

"Who are you?" thundered Germain. "Drop those weapons, or your life won't be worth a cent."

"Maybe not worth cent if do droppee them," the grinned rejoinder. "You puttee hands high uppee, else allee samee hear something dlop, you bettee! Keepee up, now."

The weapons themselves were the strongest argument, and they prevailed.

The two men put up their hands, cursing.

"Trapped you that time, didn't I?" the supposed Chinaman then said, in a different voice. "This is the second inning, with Broadway Billy on top. Don't make a move, now, either of you or it will mean death."

He had not forgotten the third man of course, who was standing where the weapons covered him, too.

Billy put a whistle to his lips and blew a shrill blast, when in came the real Wun Lung, with half a dozen at his back, among whom were Happy Harry, Silent Seth, Fatty-Skinny, Roger Watts, with a brace of capable detectives for good measure.

"Trapped!" cried the Mad Chemist.

"Tricked!"

"Yes, and captured, too," said Billy.

"Men, take them and handcuff them in the best manner."

In a moment it was done.

"There you are," cried Billy, casting off his disguise. "Now, men, two of you remain on guard, while the rest of us search these premises."

Wun Lung led the way, bearing a light,

and they went down the stone stairs and along the same passage we have seen before.

When they had gone about half its length, though, the guide stopped and opened a door in the side wall.

A room was disclosed, and at a glance its secret was revealed.

"Counterfeiters!"

So it was, but not in the way of coiners. These had a lay-out for counterfeiting bank bills, and everything was in open sight just as they had stopped work on the last occasion.

This secret out, everything else was understood readily enough.

The secret did not stop there, but was carried on thoroughly, till the secrets of the old place were laid bare.

And when that had been done, Broadway Billy and his Beagles, with one of the detectives, took their leave of the Ruins, the others remaining on guard over the prisoners.

A conveyance was awaiting them out on the main road, and ere long they were at Brisbane.

There some arrests were quietly made, and the parties had their choice of going at once to jail or of being taken to the Ruins.

They preferred the latter, and were taken there, thinking, no doubt, that a chance would offer for their escape, which they could not get if they chose to be put in the lock-up.

In the mean time David Haswick had not been idle at Granton, but, having been in some manner warned of the scheme at work, was in hiding in the grounds of the Granton manse to await the appearance of the designing Lycurgus and Madeline Pleyton, and a constable was with him to make the arrests.

CHAPTER XV.

HOW IT CAME OUT.

A WOMAN entered the shaded grounds when the veil of darkness had fully dropped, and made her way close to the house.

There she remained under cover of the bushes that hedged the main walk, waiting for something or some one. And a man who had come in after her took up his station further away.

These were seen by David Haswick and the constable with him, and the constable gave Haswick some whispered directions.

Haswick immediately left the constable and made his way quietly out of the grounds.

About half an hour later a carriage drew up at the front gates.

A man alighted, and came down the main walk.

He was near the house, when the woman stepped out from cover and met him, and holding out her hands, said:

"David?"

"Gretna!" was the exclaimed response.

"Oh! I am so glad you have come!" the woman cried, in low tone. "I am in despair."

"Why, loved one, what is wrong? What has happened?"

"Father means to force me to marry Dick Bardner, and there is only one escape for me. Will you rescue me? You know I am yours—yours till death, dear Dave!"

"Yes, come at once. My carriage is at the gate, and I will take you to the minister immediately—"

"No, no, for I have been crying so that my face is a fright. But, you go and bring him, and we will be wed under the trees. He will come for me, I am sure he will—"

"No, that will not do, loved one. You must come with me, but you need not lift your veil, if you do not wish to; it will not be necessary. My darling Gretna shall not be cheated of her love!"

There was meaning in that last sentence. He took her arm and led her hastily away,

and they entered the carriage and were driven off.

As the carriage rolled away, the heavy hand of the constable fell upon the shoulder of the other man in hiding, and his voice sternly ordered:

"Surrender, Fred Lycurgus, for you are my prisoner!"

"What—what do you mean?"

"Just what I say. If you resist me you will be sorry, for I can handle you. Give me your hands."

The constable was a powerful fellow, and before Lycurgus could think of trying to escape him, had snapped handcuff upon his wrists.

"Release me, and at once," the prisoner demanded. "If you don't, I'll make such an uproar that you will be glad to do so. This is an outrage, and you have no right to hold me."

"You may make all the fuss you want to," was the cool response to that. "I know what I am about, and you will find that you are in a trap you will not get out of in a hurry. Come along with me, now, and the better for you if you come quietly. You can't escape me."

Finding that threats were of no avail, the prisoner tried bribing, but that was useless, and he was forced to submit.

On the following morning persons from Granton and Brisbane were summoned to come in all haste to the Ruins.

The persons making the call were Broadway Billy and David Haswick, and, needless to say, each one summoned made haste to respond.

By ten o'clock all were assembled in the great room of the old stone house, and Broadway Billy addressed the company, telling the story of the case in full.

Among those present were Stanwood Granton and wife, with Gretna; Banker Bardner and his son Richard; Landlord Priceley, of Brisbane, and many others who had interest in the matter.

"This is the ending of a great case," Billy said to them. "In the first place, this man whom you have known as the Mad Chemist is one of the most expert of counterfeiters, and he came here in the guise he did to carry on his nefarious work in safety."

"Lycurgus, his pretending secretary, is an expert engraver, once in the employ of the Government. The others with them were all in the work, and the story of the Mad Chemist, and their imposing upon him, was all idle talk to avert suspicion from their real business. And they had a branch at Hartford, where a large part of the money was put on the market."

"They might have gone on successfully for some time to come, had not Lycurgus fallen in love with Miss Granton. To remove Mr. Haswick he captured him at night when he was returning from Brisbane, dropping a lasso over him from the big tree by the cemetery and bringing him here to the Ruins through a tunnel that runs from here to the big vault. It was a clever trick, and well carried out. But it has been brought to naught."

"The ghost was a trick, too; a wooden figure dressed in white, having movable arms. And the voices from the air, as so often heard, these were made by pipes running from the vault up into the old tree, carefully hid from view, the speakers being down in the vault and out of sight. Oh, yes, a clever scheme, but it was overdone, as is usually the case. Then the scheme between Fred Lycurgus, as I will still call him, though he has other names and Madeline Pleyton, was another branch of the matter, and that too, has come to nothing."

"But, let the prisoners be brought in."

They were brought, and at length the keen young detective went over every inch

the ground, until their guilt was made so clear that none could doubt a single charge. Lycurgus did try to disown any knowledge of the true work Germain was carrying on, but he was made a liar by the paper that was found on his person, a copy of which Germain had in his pocket. Had other proof been wanting, this would have been enough in itself.

It is unnecessary to detail all that was said and done. The hour was an exciting one indeed. Lycurgus and Miss Pleyton stood forth abashed in their guilt, especially the young woman. And all the others were powerless to say a single word in their defense when the young detective had done with them.

The prisoners were taken to Brisbane and lodged in jail, and The Ruins was given into the keeping of a Government detective. Broadway Billy and his boys were highly praised, and even Landlord Priceley and Dick Bardner had to admit that they had been mistaken in him, and that he had closed their eyes nicely to his true worth. Now they were able to understand upon what his reputation had been built.

The guilty ones received their just deserts, we are glad to record. Miss Pleyton escaped prison, but was glad enough to get away from that part of the country, where her shame was greater than she could face. David Haswick and Gretna Granton were married in due time, and Stanwood Granton has never had reason to repent of giving his consent to the union. Dick Bardner gave way with good grace, and not long afterward found his life companion in another very estimable young lady of Granton.

Of the others who have been mentioned in our story, nothing need be said, unless it be the Chinaman, Wun Lung. Broadway Billy took care of him, poor fellow, finding a good situation where his service was worth much to his kind-hearted employer and his reward rich unto himself. And for Billy and his team, and the others of his "brigade"—why, what more need be said than that they are ready for the rally!

THE END.

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